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THE PALESTINE CRISIS

IT seems as though a malignant destiny is determined to prevent the coming of peace to a distracted country. The attack by the Irgun on the British Headquarters in Jerusalem occurred a few minutes after the conclusion of the Cabinet meeting in which, at long last, a constructive approach to the Palestine problem had been discussed. The explosion caused the death, not only of scores of innocent British civilians and soldiers, but of the most distinguished Jews in the Administration. It is bound to provoke ruthless measures of suppression on the part of an army in which the inevitable hatred of the unseen assassin was already arousing a dangerous wave of anti-Semitism.

In his statement to the House of Commons and his answers to questions, the Prime Minister showed an admirable determination to work for a constructive settlement undeterred by criminal violence. The reports that this settlement will be along federal lines are probably well-informed. But until the details are published, it is impossible to judge whether the new plan is only a paper scheme for limited local autonomy—which can solve nothing—or whether it boldly places responsibility on the shoulders of the two peoples and removes from this country the odium of maintaining a mandatory regime which has perforce degenerated into a police state.

Meanwhile it is essential that the deadlock between the British Government and the Jewish Agency should be broken, if the chances of a settlement are not to be destroyed by the tragic action and reaction of terrorism and repression. The vaunted ability of General Barker and the Palestine Police to stamp out terrorism has been shown up by last Monday's outrage. Hundreds of Jewish Labour and Trade Union leaders, who had been desperately fighting against the growing influence of the Irgun, were rounded up by our soldiers. The field was left free for a savage and ruinous war between the tiny and extremely efficient Irgun and the vast but fumbling forces of the British Army.

The Irgun is the deadliest enemy of the National Home because it justifies by its actions the methods of repression which too many British officers in Palestine are anxious to employ. But equally, the British Government should appreciate that the ill-judged round-up of Agency and Trade Union leaders, demanded by General Barker, failed to break the Irgun, antagonised the whole Jewish population and undermined the influence of those moderate Jewish leaders without whose aid restoration of law and order is impossible.

There is a real danger that the White Paper may only divert attention from the central issue of the constructive settlement. It was no secret that political control of the Haganah was in the hands of a few Agency leaders and that the Haganah kept its contacts with the Irgun and Stern Gang. The White Paper proves that certain Jews were doing some very dangerous double-dealing, and indicates that their motive was to prevent the worst excesses of terrorism.

The history of Palestine, since 1939, consists almost wholly of double-dealing by all concerned, not least the Palestine Administration and police. The Jewish Agency, despite frequent mistakes, has followed the advice of Dr. Weizmann and has throughout sought to persuade the British Government to take the action which alone would remove the causes of terrorism. The deadlock can only be broken down by a willingness on both sides to stop recriminations and to resume co-operation. To this end the release of the members of the Agency Executive, still held without charge, and a frank exchange of views between the Prime Minister and Dr. Weizmann—who has not been invited to Downing Street during his first week in London—would be an essential preliminary.

Bexley and Pontypool

From the results of the first two of this week's three by-elections the Opposition press has been quick to draw the inference that the sharp fall in the Government candidates' majorities is an amber light, warning the Cabinet that it must relax controls, eschew "planning" and pigeon-hole its remaining measures for the nationalisation of key industries. We do not draw these deductions from the voting either at Bexley or at Pontypool. In both cases, the total poll was considerably lower than a year ago; but this is a characteristic feature of by-elections, particularly when they coincide with the holiday season. In Bexley, a dormitory constituency with a large lower middle-class element, the "floating" vote, which was attracted to the Government candidate last summer, was probably substantial. The 5,000 decrease in the Labour poll suggests that a part of this marginal vote was probably lost to the Opposition; but, though the Tory poll rose by 5,000, it is fair to assume that a large proportion of the 5,750 Liberal votes cast in the triangular fight of 1945 was transferred in the present straight fight to the Tory. In Pontypool, the Government majority fell from 19,000 to 14,000, but this was due to Labour abstentions: there was virtually no increase in the Tory poll.

It is true, of course, that these results—Bexley in particular—show that the Government's stock has fallen a little. But when it is remembered that the elections were fought at a moment when the initial frictions of the bread rationing scheme were causing the maximum public irritation; and that the Opposition, backed by a campaign of unscrupulous misrepresentation by the mass-circulation Tory press, had concentrated on exploiting, as signs of Government incapacity, world shortages for which the Government is in no way responsible—it is a matter for satisfaction that the swing-over of votes in these by-elections was not greater than it was. After an intensive campaign to convince the electorate that the Government is a gang of doctrinaire tyrants, prepared even to destroy the freedom of the press, the Opposition has persuaded a few people who voted Labour last summer to vote Tory, and more not to vote at all.

Whether the Opposition in the coming year can give momentum to this (at present slight) trend, depends, so far as domestic issues are concerned, on many factors—such as housing progress and the performance of the coal industry. If there be any warning to be drawn by the Government from Bexley and Pontypool, it is not that they must retreat before extra-parliamentary pressure groups, but must educate the public as to the facts upon which their policy decisions—in rationing, in giving priority to exports, in husbanding the dollar credit, and so forth—are based. They must put over the Socialist case continually and forcibly in terms comprehensible by the common man.

Skirting the Problems

Publication in the *New York Herald Tribune* of large excerpts of the draft Peace Treaties reveals that in Italy's case the pill is sugared by the hint in the preamble that, after signature, Italy may win membership of the United Nations. Italians, looking not merely at the disarmament clauses, but at the cession of Trieste and the whole of Italy's colonial Empire, are entitled to complain that the Big Four, unable to reach agreement in any sphere where their vital interests were concerned, saved their last meeting from complete deadlock by a series of compromises over each other's claims at the expense of helpless and, for the moment, strategically less important Italy. Indeed, the Allied and Associated Nations are meeting in Paris with a peculiar agenda. They are being asked to ratify or, in some cases, complete agreements relating to the fringe of the three real problems on whose solution the future peace of the world depends. With two of these closely associated problems—the future of Germany and the balance of forces in the Middle East—we deal this week in leading articles. The third issue is the struggle in the Far East between the Communist areas and an increasingly reactionary Kuomintang Government confident, at present, of American support, which Madame Sun Yat-sen, breaking a long silence, has now condemned as leading to civil war. General Marshall has done his best to arrange an armistice, but the Kuomintang and the Communists, both conscious of Great Power support behind the scenes, are already at war. The temper of the Kuomintang Right-wing has been shown in the last few days by the murder of two prominent supporters of the Democratic League—liberal professors who sought for peace and unity in a country which is rapidly drifting back into the condition of a colony in which civil war is the endemic result of the fight for suzerainty between more powerful states.

Argentina Negotiates

So far, President Peron has retained the initiative in his negotiations both with Washington and with the British trade delegation in Buenos Aires. While Britain seeks a convenient method of liquidating Argentina's large sterling balance and a settlement of the long-standing dispute about the British-owned railways, Washington wants trade concessions. Peron's request to Washington for priority shipments of armaments was side-stepped by an American counter-offer to "unfreeze" 800 million dollars of Argentine funds and to abolish the commercial blacklist. Peron, failing to secure a promise of arms, is holding out against concessions to American business interests. He is meanwhile trying to drive a hard bargain with Britain. The delegation led by Sir Wilfred Eady was first faced with a demand for the conversion of Argentina's sterling balance into a long-term loan, a refusal to use considerable part of it for the purchase of the British railroads, and a threat that the British trade agreement which expires on August 20th would be renewed only on much less favourable terms. But the threat to push meat prices up to the American level—from £13 to £40 per steer—must be regarded primarily as a manœuvre. Peron may hope to obtain a fairly large increase in prices, especially in view of the world food situation; but Britain is the chief long-term customer for Argentine beef, and Peron must know that he could not maintain an artificial price after the emergency is over. How much the British delegation will concede on this point will depend on its progress on the other major questions. Sir Wilfred Eady is doubtless keeping one eye on the overtures from Washington.

The Turkish Elections

For the first time, Turkey has held elections under secret and universal suffrage. The People's Party, which has held undivided power for the twenty-two years since Ataturk's revolution, has at last submitted its regime to popular decision and, as was expected, has secured a sweeping majority, especially in the rural districts. In the towns, however, it has met substantial opposition from the Democratic Party, under the leadership of Celal Bayar, the former Minister of National Economy, which is supported by the commercial class and by a large part of the intelligentsia. The remaining parties are at present insignificant, but the presence of about seventy deputies from the Democratic Party may offer a greater check upon President Inonu's somewhat intolerant regime than has so far existed. The Democratic Party's programme does not differ greatly from that of the People's Party—both claim to be the true heirs of Ataturk—but until recently it has had to suffer both official restrictions and organised rowdyism. Under present conditions in Turkey, the emergence of an organised and recognised opposition group is more important than the formulation of radical programmes which are incapable of fulfilment. Naturally, President Inonu has made much of Russian pressure in the East to ensure continuity of leadership. But in home politics, it is by no means certain that the regime will prove any more capable than in the past of solving Turkey's pressing economic difficulties.

Indians in South Africa

Serious trouble is brewing in South Africa over the Indian question. Cables from Natal tell of heavy sentences of imprisonment which have been imposed on leaders of the Indian community. Mr. Rustomjee, ex-president of the South African Indian Congress, was sentenced to three months hard labour, when he, together with 50 "passive resisters," made a peaceful protest against recent segregation laws, by occupying land prohibited to Asiatics. Dr. Naicker, the president of the Natal Indian Congress, has been sentenced to six months' hard labour, and Dr. Dadoo, president of the Transvaal Indian Congress, to three months. Over 150 passive resisters are now in gaol, and many who have refused to pay fines are now threatened with attachment of their property. Feeling is running so high that the funeral of an Indian constable, who was on duty near the passive resistance camp and died as a result of assaults by Europeans, became a monster Indian demonstration, attended by about 10,000 persons. While this is going on in South Africa, the Government of India has filed a formal complaint with Uno, charging the Union of South Africa with discriminating against a quarter of a million Indians living in that country. The Government of India has already cancelled its trade agreement with South Africa and recalled its High Commissioner there. The position of Indians in South Africa has been progressively deteriorating. The matter has come to a head with the recent passage of the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act. This prohibits Indians from buying or occupying property in certain European areas and gives statutory enforcement to the principle of segregation. In return for these disabilities, the Act gives the Indians communal representation in Parliament—but their representatives must be Europeans, two in the Senate and two in the House of Assembly. The problem is a ticklish one. Europeans and Indians in Durban are now approximately equal in numbers, but, the Indian birthrate being what it is, it is estimated that within 50 years there will be 800 Indians to every 300 Europeans. This being so, the Europeans are fighting a losing rearguard action to maintain their White exclusiveness in South Africa.

Soaring Prices in the U.S.A

At the beginning of this week the official figures showed a rise of wholesale commodity prices by about 25 per cent. since O.P.A. came to an end; and this is obviously no more than a beginning. A committee of the two Houses has drafted a new Price Control Bill which does include some measure of control over essential foodstuffs; but nobody knows whether this Bill will become law, and even if it does it will not put back prices to the levels from which they have escaped. Nor, in all probability, will it prevent them from rising still further; for the control now proposed is very much weaker than that which has been swept away. There have been attempts at buyers' protest strikes in various parts of the United States, including New York; and the Trade Unions are getting ready with wage demands to meet the increases that have already occurred. Conditions are already inflationary, and could be fairly described as constituting a boom already, if it were not necessary to reserve that word for bigger things still to come. Foodstuffs have risen more sharply than most other commodities, with serious reactions on the position of the white collar employees as well as on that of the manual workers. Rents in some areas have risen astronomically, in face of the acute shortage of housing accommodation. The immediate reactions on grain exports may be serious, as the high prices are obviously encouraging still more diversion of grain stocks to feeding animals. It is all a very pretty illustration of the behaviour of American capitalism and of the American farm interests when they are given their head; and it is also a very bad augury for that "stability at a high level of employment" which America has promised.

Private Transport Monopoly

Having deluged the country with propaganda designed to convince the unthinking public that nationalisation of transport would be a national disaster, the Road Haulage Association has apparently decided that the best way to defeat Mr. Barnes and ward off the threat of public control, is to put forward a "plan." This they have done in the form of a memorandum which is endorsed by the main-line railway managements and has the blessing of the British Federation of Industries. The "plan" is in fact an impressive piece of mumbo-jumbo in which the real objective—transport monopoly under private ownership—is camouflaged by the lavish use of meaningless phrases such as "correlated rate structures" and "reasonable charges." On a road transport industry still based on a multiplicity of private ownerships, there are to be imposed common carrier obligations—a big sop to the main-line railways. The public is to have "an unfettered right" to choose the form of transport it wants for its needs; and there is to be a Road-Rail Tribunal to establish a national rate structure "based on road factors" (whatever that may mean) in the case of the hauliers, and designed, in the case of the railways, to be "capable of correlation" with railway charges. Obviously such an arrangement would give no assurance either that rates would in fact be reasonable or that the most economic use would be made of available transport facilities. In the case of road transport, rates could not be tested by reference to publicly known capitalisation or operating costs; and the intention seems to be that the main-line railways should compensate themselves for loss of revenue to road transport by increasing charges on selected freight. Mr. Barnes, we are confident, will not be persuaded by this special pleading to abandon nationalisation in favour of a joint rail-road monopoly which thus seeks statutory protection for its earnings regardless of its efficiency.

PARLIAMENT: Ministerial Pilots

Wednesday.

THE House is now arduously completing the final stages of the big Bills. As each of them returns to the floor from the Committee Room upstairs, it is interesting to examine the seamanship of the Ministers who have been their pilots. Mr. Shinwell, though he was criticised at the time for an inclination to prolong the voyage by charging some of the reefs, is seen in retrospect to have achieved his main mission, reaching port to schedule. Not to sacrifice the substance of the Bill, and yet to keep his time-table is after all the real job of the Minister in charge. In this respect Jim Griffiths is accepted as a masterly Parliamentarian, in contrast to Ivor Thomas, who, less from his own fault than from lack of Socialist convictions on the part of his Minister in "Another Place," made unduly heavy weather in steering through the Civil Aviation Bill. But it is undoubtedly the Chancellor of the Exchequer who is the master-mariner of the session. Last Friday, he sailed his Finance Bill triumphantly into port in a placid third reading debate. This was a festive occasion and all concerned exchanged amiable reminiscences of the voyage. The stalwarts of the Opposition, Mr. Pitman, Mr. Braithwaite, Mr. Spearman, and last but not least, Captain Crookshank—the Robertson-Hare of the Opposition Front Bench—were all there to congratulate him while Sir Waldron Smithers pronounced yet another funeral oration on sound finance. There were kind words too for the Solicitor-General, whose charm on occasion has been the only excuse for an inordinate passion for detailed exposition. On the other hand, it was difficult to recognise, in the self-confident and alert Financial Secretary of last Friday, the blinking junior master who a few months ago almost collapsed under the pranks of an unruly class of Tory schoolboys. Glenvil Hall not only wound up with elegance, but went on to answer some acutely embarrassing questions raised by Bob Boothby in an excellent adjournment debate on the American Loan.

On Monday it was the turn of the Minister of Health. His report stage also showed a remarkable development of Ministerial technique. On earlier occasions at the Dispatch Box, Nye Bevan was still the brilliant guerrilla leader. He was inclined to score off his opponents even though this prolonged the debate. In Committee he has learned the advantages on occasion of conciliation, but still retains a unique dialectical knock-out. On Monday, he mastered what might have been a serious revolt of Labour members who were aided by Piratin in his best speech so far. They fought sincerely and ably for the borough as a unit of hospital organisation, but seemed completely unaware that the requirements of Socialist planning are incompatible with the defence of existing local goverment units, even in cases where there is a Labour majority. One of the few speeches in support of the Minister came from a Conservative, Mr. E. P. Smith. Charlie Key made an unanswerable reply.

Last Thursday's debate was mainly notable for three speeches by the Leader of the Opposition. The first—obviously extempore—was the result of John Freeman's action in raising the issue of Parliamentary Privilege in relation to Mrs. Tennant's notorious poster. Some Government supporters were uncomfortable at the idea of using such a big and traditional stick against so puny an assailant. But Mr. Churchill succeeded in dissipating such doubts. His cavalier dismissal of Privilege, followed a few minutes later by his demand for protection against Mr. Gallacher, obviously embarrassed his own Front Bench. A few minutes later, his reply to Stafford Cripps' Report on India was so mischievous that Sir Stanley Reed disowned him in the name of the Tory Back Benchers. His final appearance—obviously against the wishes of his colleagues—was on bread rationing. His rambling and repetitious speech was markedly inferior to Bob Hudson's, who can at least quote figures as though he understood them. Some good contributions came from the Government Benches, a model speech from George Brown, a scientific lecture from Evan Durbin, and a sensible three-minute effort from Mr. Leslie. From the Opposition side, Quintin Hogg staged a come-back from obscurity, and Mr. Duthie stood out from a ruck of propagandists by his obvious knowledge of the subject.

PHINEAS

THE NEXT STEPS IN GERMANY

WHAT did Mr. Molotov really say at Paris about the future of Germany? The two points on which the press in this country has mainly seized are, first, his insistence on a unified Germany and, secondly, his demand for a colossal sum in reparations, to be drawn not only from dismantled German plant, but also from future German production. Further points of which some notice has been taken are his rejection of the demand for an immediate pooling of supplies over all four Zones of occupation and his insistence on Four-Power control of the Ruhr industrial area. These points have been represented as a sharp reversal of the Soviet Union's previous attitude, and as making almost inevitable a sharp breach between East and West. Before reaching any such conclusion, it would be wiser to study the whole of what Mr. Molotov said, and to do our best to appreciate the substance of the Soviet Union's complaints about the handling of the German problem. For, if we think we have cause to complain about the Soviet Union's doings in Germany, they are of the same opinion about ours.

According to the Soviet view, the first task of the Powers occupying Germany is to eradicate Fascism and to lay the foundations for a democracy. This means not merely removing notorious Nazis from office, but altering the basis of class-power by thorough-going land reform and by expropriation of the great capitalist interests. When the Russians say "democracy," they do not mean by the word what the Americans mean or what Mr. Churchill means. It is, for them, not a merely parliamentary word; it means a far-reaching change in the economic basis of society. This change has largely been accomplished in the Soviet Zone; it has not been even begun in the other three Zones. Naturally not; for the American-Churchill view of democracy rules it out. According to the latter view, political change comes first, and then the new political bodies are free to make economic changes *if they will*. But according to the Soviet view, no democratic political government is possible *until the economic changes have been made*.

On this issue, does Mr. Attlee agree with Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Churchill, or with Mr. Molotov? His Government has unquestionably behaved so far, in Germany, as if it agreed with Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Churchill. A bridge could possibly have been built between the two views if, in the British Zone, we had made haste to create an effective Social-Democratic administration to collaborate with us, and in conjunction with it had proceeded at once to lay the foundations for a Socialist economy. Mr. Molotov would not have liked this very much; for he would not have regarded it as real Socialism. But he would have little to criticise; for it would have meant a much more thorough liquidation of Nazis and near-Nazis. Mr. Byrnes could not have been expected to behave in the same way in the American Zone; for the Americans, standing for the restoration of capitalism, cannot help backing near-Nazis, if not actual Nazis, and do not want to change the basis of class-power. But the British, as Socialists, might have been expected to make some attempt to follow a Socialist policy in Germany, whereas in fact they have done nothing of the sort.

This is Mr. Molotov's principal complaint. He also suspects that we are plotting to evade the Potsdam decisions about the destruction of German industrial war potential, in the hope of building up the Ruhr, under exclusive Western control, into an arsenal for a possible later war between East and West. Of course, no such thing is in our Government's mind; but there is no getting away from the fact that, if it were to come to a conflict between the Soviet Union and the West, the Ruhr would necessarily be a most valuable asset to the side that held it. Hence Mr. Molotov's insistence that international control of it must be a Four-Power affair, with Soviet participation, and his out-of-hand rejection of any proposal to allow its industrial capacity to be increased except on that basis.

Mr. Molotov's defence of Germany's unity, and his repudiation—highly inconvenient to the French Communist Party—of all plans for the detachment of the Ruhr from the rest of Germany obviously flow from his sense that partition would leave the Ruhr under exclusive Western control. He admits that it may be necessary to allow German production to expand in due course beyond the ridiculously low limits worked out after the Potsdam Conference; but he points out that in fact the Potsdam limits will not be approached for a long time yet—so that there are many more urgent questions—and he attaches to any permitted increase drastic conditions about the effective purging of Germany from Nazi influences and the eradication of war potential. He also complicates matters with his renewal of the claim for reparations from future German production.

On the issue of reparations, Mr. Molotov now appeals back from the Potsdam to the Crimea Conference. He points out that the Crimea Protocol provided not only for reparations in the form of a levy on German equipment, but also for annual deliveries from current production, and for "reparations in labour," and that the Americans, though not the British, agreed to the global figure of 20,000 million dollars, half of which was to go to the Soviet Union. It had been supposed that the Potsdam decisions on reparations superseded the Crimea decisions. Indeed, the Potsdam-prescribed provisions for the scaling down of German productive equipment to what would suffice just to allow the Germans to live on an "average European" standard admit of no other reasonable interpretation. Presumably what Mr. Molotov now means is that, if the Potsdam provisions for the limiting of German productive capacity are to be modified, the Soviet demand for reparations out of current production will be automatically revived. The figure of 20,000 million dollars cannot be seriously meant. It is a bargaining counter, to be used in connection with proposals from the Western countries for relaxing the control of German production.

Of course, from our end the situation looks entirely different. Mr. Molotov points out that even 10,000 million dollars is only a fraction of the damage suffered at Nazi hands by the Soviet Union: we feel that we are being made to support the cost of keeping the Germans alive—they are actually dying, slowly, of starvation—while he is clamouring for us to deliver more plant and thus to reduce further their capacity to meet the cost of their own necessary imports. We feel poor: he thinks of us as living like millionaires in comparison with Soviet citizens and as having the bottomless pocket of America to dip into, whereas his country's requests for an American loan have been refused.

The question is, what are we to do now? Are we to accept the separation of the three Western Zones from the Russian Zone as a fact, to ignore the entire Potsdam scheme, and to set to work to build up German capacity to export in order to relieve the burden on our own Budget and on our balance of payments? Or are we to make another effort to come to terms?

Clearly we ought to make another effort, along two lines. First, we ought to adopt in our own Zone, and to encourage the French to adopt in theirs, a policy of basic economic reform. Such a reform must be carried out with the participation of the Germans who are prepared to help, and to the accompaniment of a real liquidation of anti-democratic political forces. Secondly, we ought to work out a Four-Power plan for control of the Ruhr, on basically Socialist lines, and to present it to Mr. Molotov at the same time as to our other partners in the occupation of Germany. In conjunction with this scheme, we ought to ask for the establishment of freedom of trade and intercourse between the Zones, and for the revision of the Potsdam quotas and of the accompanying plans for the surrender of German equipment—for the two naturally go together. If the Russians want, instead of the equipment which Germany cannot reasonably be made to give up, a manageable levy on future German production—well, why not, provided that it is properly related to an actual surplus of production over what is needed for the German home market and to pay for necessary imports? The Russians are entitled to receive reparations in one way or the other, but not both, nor to an extent that would cripple German existence.

If the Soviet Union were to turn down a plan worked out along these lines, and including real steps, such as they could recognise, towards making Germany a democracy, there would be nothing left for us but to go ahead on our own. But let us make no mistake about the price we should have to pay for going into partnership with the Americans against the Soviet Union in German affairs. Such a partnership would in effect compel us to restore a *capitalist* Germany, which would also be inevitably a dangerous Germany in which militarism and nationalist-imperialism would be likely to revive. The only Germany that can be safely allowed to recover and to become self-governing on a unified basis is a really democratic Germany—and that means a Germany resting on a basis of agrarian and industrial democracy, such as the Americans will certainly not help us to build. Therefore, even if we do have to act in the Ruhr without the Soviet Union, we must not let ourselves be driven into acting with the Americans, or under American influence. If the other occupying Powers will not join us in Socialising the Ruhr under international control, let us Socialise it ourselves. Such a policy should not prevent the establishment of inter-Zonal trade, on a freer basis, or impede American pooling in the immediate task of feeding the people in all the Western Zones.

The Paris Conference as a whole showed that the Soviet Union did not want a breakdown. Mr. Molotov compromised in the end, not only over Trieste, but over quite a number of other issues. It is safe to say that he does not want a breakdown over Germany any more than he did over Italy. Indeed, he must want it even less; for its likeliest result would be just what he fears most—the integration of the Ruhr into a Western sphere of influence, which would seem to him equivalent to its annexation by the capitalist forces of the world. We want, however, not merely to avoid a final breakdown, but to find a workable solution; and that we shall not find as long as Mr. Molotov suspects that in Western Germany we are busily restoring capitalism. A real change in policy in our Zone, coupled with a genuine offer of participation in a Four-Power plan for the Ruhr, without its *political* severance from the rest of Germany, might make all the difference. At all events, it is well worth trying and much less dangerous than going all-in with the Americans to make Western Germany safe for capitalist exploitation.

LESSONS OF THE OILFIELDS

THE news of the strikes in the Anglo-Iranian and Mosul oilfields has been noticeably scanty. It is, however, clear that long-standing local grievances were exploited by a third party and that the strikes brought oil production for a few days to a virtual standstill. It is almost as though Marshal Stalin had decided to remind Mr. Bevin by a little practical demonstration that the exclusion of Russia from the London discussions on Palestine had not passed unnoticed in Moscow. If the Labour Cabinet had hoped with the help of the U.S.A. to build up the Middle East as an anti-Russian bloc, then this reminder may not have been without effect. The prod which was delivered was sufficiently violent to indicate to strategic planners who are thinking of a possible collision with Russia that the outbreak of war would be immediately followed by the cutting off of our oil supplies from Persia. As for the Iraqi oilfields, the question would be not whether, but for how many months, we should be able to maintain production. If modern wars are fought on oil, we should certainly lose a war against Russia in the Middle East.

It is surely far better that this issue should be brought out into the open. We should discuss the dangers of this war while there is still time by discussion to avoid it. The tone of the last debate in the House of Representatives on the British Loan showed clearly enough that American assistance to this country will from now on be directed almost entirely to strengthening our power against the U.S.S.R. The three Americans who are discussing the future of Palestine in the Cabinet Offices with their British opposite numbers this week are primarily concerned—apart from the domestic American problem of Zionist influence in New York State—in sustaining Britain's Middle Eastern position with the minimum American commitment of armed force. Will these three gentlemen have drawn the correct conclusion from the strikes in the oilfields? Will they have realised that, whatever help America gives, Britain's position is strategically untenable as long as she is regarded throughout the Middle East as the patron of corrupt politicians, concerned solely with her own strategic interest. Even if American troops were added to the four British divisions now in Palestine—and they almost certainly will not be—their presence would make no difference. Britain's political fortifications in this area will crumble away whenever the Soviet Union is prepared to call the bluff and to combine a threat of military force with an appeal to the masses over the heads of their corrupt rulers. To challenge Russia, while defending the existing social order, is to lose the Middle East before the war starts. That in plain language is the lesson of the strikes last week.

Mr. Bevin himself must be keenly aware of this weakness. Often enough he has spoken of his determination to raise the standard of living of the fellaheen and to soak the rich Effendi who picked up all the profits of the British and American armies of the Middle East during the war. So far his words have been bigger than his deeds. He still pays 50 per cent. of the total revenue of King Ibn Saud; he has just made Transjordan a new independent State with its puppet King enthroned in a land of desolate poverty, and he is training and financing the Transjordanian army. He has not done one single thing in Iraq which could distinguish his tenure of office from that of his Tory predecessor. The people of this miserable State, torn by minority conflicts, and exhibiting the harshest contrasts between riches and poverty, have no reason to believe that British Socialism regards their country as anything other than a source of oil and a convenient aerodrome. It is the same story with Persia. One year after Mr. Bevin took office, an intelligent person could only conclude that he was continuing the age-old imperial conflict against Russia with every respect for tradition. If Mr. Bevin induces the United States to involve itself in the Middle East, he may strengthen his hand in his negotiations with Arab potentates and politicians. But for the rising middle class and for the embryonic trade union movement which alone represent the masses, the emergence of an Anglo-American bloc under the ægis of a Labour Government will merely be a sign that British Socialism is a fraud and that it is time to turn to other and more revolutionary allies.

We have seen in other parts of the world the deadly effects of drifting into incompatibility. In China the East-West deadlock is almost complete and in Germany there is a similar danger. Must the same thing happen in the Middle East, or will it still be possible to work out some basis of understanding between the Big Three on which the area could be developed for the benefit of the Arabs and the Great Powers?

Realists in Britain and America argue that even the suggestion is dangerous. We cannot let the Russians in, they say, without imperilling our whole position. And, since we have no time to carry through the social revolution without which Arab democracy must remain a sham, we must shore up the existing class structure, buy up the present rulers, and hope to control them, in the event of war with Russia, by using British officers to train their armies and making those armies dependent on Britain and America for raw material.

This sort of realism is nothing but romantic folly. The Middle Eastern States, in particular, Egypt and Iraq, are moving steadily towards a revolutionary situation in which the tiny clique of politicians who run them will be challenged by a dissatisfied and nationalistic intelligentsia in close contact with the worker and the peasant. If war were to break out before this revolutionary struggle reaches its climax, these States will anyway be indefensible; and it is a waste of British money to shore them up. The Russians know, and we should admit it to ourselves, that we cannot rely on the Arab States or on Persia.

If this is the situation, one conclusion seems to follow. All our efforts in the Middle East should be directed to assisting the new and popular forces and canalising their energies into peaceful and constructive channels. That can be done best not by sending junior T. E. Lawrences to train Arab armies, but by working out, if possible with the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., and, if not, alone, schemes for the development and in particular for the irrigation of this once fertile area. Mr. Bevin's methods of countering the Russian threat in the Middle East can only increase its danger.

FOUR FATHOMS DOWN

What are well-informed fish circles saying
  As they flap round Bikini lagoon,
Since a ray on the wave was seen playing
  That was not of the sun or the moon?
'Quake warnings their spies are relaying,
  And their time in the shallows is brief,
And the clam and the eel and the jellyfish feel
  There's a threat to the life of the reef.

The crab of deep shelters is thinking,
  Dispersion the parrot fish urge,
The snappers see no use in blinking
  That the moment has come to submerge;
As submarine targets are sinking
  The flying fish take to their tails
And even the mussel gets ready to hustle
  In the wake of the luminous snails.

Fish circles are filled with foreboding
  As their atomised future they glimpse,
And the petrified puffers are goading
  The warlike and truculent shrimps;
But even the shrimps in exploding,
  And even the squids as they blaze
May switch off in a panic in the blast oceanic
  And lose in the battle of rays.

The barnacles plan a petition,
  The lobsters feel far from immune
The starfish bemoan their position
  When the shock hits Bikini lagoon,
The sponges anticipate fission
  As they wait for the sickening swish,
And red and white coral denounce as immoral
  The threat to the whole world of fish.

SAGITTARIUS

A LONDON DIARY

A FRIEND of mine, whose household consists of four adults, a child of six and a baby of two, tells me of his experience last week-end in working out the bread rationing scheme for his family. He found that his household was entitled, in all, to 200 BUs each four-weekly rationing period, and that to cover the previous rate of bread consumption in the house, he would have to "bank" 136 BUs with the baker, whose roundsman, in my friend's case, brings bread three times a week to the door. So far, so good. My friend had clearly an ample margin of BUs left over to cover flour, cake and buns. The difficult part of the job, it seems, was to work out the simplest way of extracting the required 136 BUs for the baker, since the L, M, and G coupons have different values, and so have some of the coupons in the baby's book. My friend, an economist by training, got the sum right, but it took him twenty minutes to complete the calculation. In the case of families less skilled in simple arithmetic the baker, having repented of his threat to mutiny, is no doubt doing the troublesome job for his customers. The scheme seems to be working fairly well, but if rationing is to continue long, the Ministry might be well advised to issue to everybody a separate bread card made up of units each worth 14 ozs of bread or the equivalent in cakes, flour, etc. The less arithmetic the better.

* * *

An ugly question is being asked by Italians. Italy's assets in this country are calculated at 14 million pounds. Mr. Bevin is reported to have referred to them in Paris as amounting to 11 million pounds. These assets, which the Allies regard as legitimate forfeit in reparations, are mainly the property of private Italian citizens, Now the Italian who holds the largest foreign funds is believed to be the late King Victor Emmanuel, whose assets in this country are said to be three millions. It is widely believed in Italy that a wangle has been carried out to exempt the King from his share in reparations and that the three millions' discrepancy represents his fortune. This may be untrue, but Italians believe it to be true and express almost as much resentment at it as they do about the boundary of Istria or the new French frontier.

* * *

The sad news of Jimmy Maxton's death comes too late this week for me to write more than a few lines about a singularly lovable man. He had been ill and had taken comparatively little part in British politics for some years. But there was a time when he was the best orator in England. He made a rule never to dine with the rich; he would not be corrupted by the "aristocratic embrace." So the Tories tried to kill his influence by making a pet of him, which was easy, because he was an excellent Parliamentarian and popular with everyone. When it was known that he would speak, the House was crowded and hushed. He would open quietly, and then the words would pour out in a dazzling fountain. From time to time Maxton would push his pirate lock from his forehead. At the end of his peroration, which always contained a murderous denunciation of the upper classes, everyone would applaud vigorously, and go out to look for their cars, saying to one another, "What an idealist! How sincere he is!" If, instead of praising his performance, they had taken him seriously, they would have cut their throats.

* * *

Details of the recent wave of arrests in Egypt reveal the extreme measures which Sidky Pasha is taking to suppress any kind of criticism. Faced with fantastic increases in the cost of living, the Egyptian workers have been demanding moderate wage increases and have managed to form for the first time a T.U.C. When the trade unions tried to call a strike, the entire leadership was clapped into the prisons—which were so full that, for the first day, there was only standing room for the prisoners. A number of Liberal politicians were included in this drive to eliminate "Communism," which Sidky Pasha interprets as widely as the Japanese militarists. Heavy prison sentences can now be given in Egypt even for having "dangerous thoughts." Among those arrested are editors of the eight newspapers which are suppressed (including the Wafd daily); the three Egyptian delegates to the World Federation of Trade Unions; the President of the Union of University Graduates and the head of the People's University—an adult education body like our W.E.A.; the leaders of the Wafdist youth movement and, ironically, the anti-Communist *Fellah* party! I see that M. Roussos, a former Liberal Prime Minister of Greece, is among the two hundred people detained. I also hear that new British camps and canteens have been opened in Egypt within the last few weeks. Evacuation looks like being a slow process, and, judging by the suppression of the most virile nationalist elements, one that frightens the Egyptian Government.

* * *

There can be few better ways of healing the scars of the last six years than by the exchange of young people between different nations. I am glad to hear of the progress that has been made by the committee which is organising the reception of children from occupied countries. Several thousand Dutch children have already stayed here in British homes or in camps and hostels, and some hundreds of French and Czechs are here at present. The committee has gone to a great deal of trouble to ensure that the children are received into homes which are suitable to their religion, social status and age and to provide proper entertainment for them. The children are wonderfully ready to enjoy themselves; the only problem has been with some, particularly among the French, whose games are apt to reflect the experience of Resistance. But that phase is past, and a more typical story is of a small boy who was so excited watching a football match that he blew his whistle and stopped the game. The Committee is also organising the visit of thousands of British children abroad on an exchange basis. But offers of hospitality and financial help are still very much needed to extend the committee's work. Anyone who can give time or money can get in touch with the Reception Committee, Young People from Occupied Countries, 29 Portman Square, London, W.1.

* * *

Talking of French children, brought up in the heroic but neurotic atmosphere of resistance, I welcome the appeal by a distinguished body of people, headed by Mrs. Attlee, for £25,000 to buy and equip a convalescent home for French children at Antibes. The appeal is headed, "British Forces' Tribute to French Families" and it is based on the gratitude which British people must feel for civilians who braved torture and death in helping British men and women to escape from the Germans during the war. A gesture if you will, but a gesture of the right kind and made to the right people.

* * *

Sir Richard Gregory's plea, at the British Association, for courage "to avert the man-created dangers to civilisation" is a veteran scientist's protest against the fooling at Bikini and the still more dangerous foolery at the Atomic Commission. The bomb is still treated as a political counter. The U.S. proposals put forward by Mr. Baruch for international control were serious, but they involved the renunciation of the Veto. The Veto, as used in minor issues, makes Uno unworkable, but, as a last resort, it is merely an expression of reality and would be used, in fact, whether legally in existence or not, by any Great Power. The Russian counter-proposals were unhelpful, since the atom bomb cannot be wished out of existence by a pious convention; the crux is readiness by both Russia and America to permit inspection. But the two proposals were not irreconcilable. The occasion, however, was used to make the Baruch proposals seem merely a device for baiting Russia on the Veto, while the Russian proposals were brushed aside as unworthy of serious discussion. In this situation, Cadogan was a mere official. Where Britain, as a "trustee" of the bomb, might have produced a workable compromise, he sat dumbly entrenched behind his instructions to support the dots and commas of the U.S. plan, while Dr. Evatt, the chairman, harried Gromyko on the Veto. So while the ghosts walk in Hiroshima, and the Americans have bombs-and-to-spare to squander at Bikini, the Atomic Commission dithers into three more committees—one to examine the legal position (i.e., the Veto); another to examine afresh the systems of control and inspection and the third, a technical committee. Even on the third, where the scientists might have risen above politics, Canada insisted that they should meet as national representatives under directive and not as dispassionate experts. The latest news is that Gromyko has turned down the American proposals "in whole or in part."

* * *

I have been looking through a new dictionary, Odhams Dictionary of the English Language, and remain, as usual, unperturbed by the vast number of words I never intend to use. A great number are, of course, scientific: I have no regrets about these. The electric eel called gymnotus remains an electric eel for me. I shall not need to write a brochure on gypsography; though, under the head of shameful confessions, I must record that at last I know what "gypsum" really is. Even as I write I find the memory beginning to blur. At every glance through a dictionary my appetite for words hesitates before one or two new temptations. "Gynarchy," for example; why did I not say at lunch to-day when we were talking about the dominion of women in American life, that the United States was "gynarchic." And "apocrustic"—a medical word, but surely a useful, clinical variant of "astringent." On the other hand, "consuetudinary" I gladly dispense with; and "heartsome," "gladsome" I spew out with "lovesome" and half the other "-somes." Odhams Dictionary stresses the latest meanings; like the Oxford, and unlike Fowler, it allows the base journalistic use of "intrigue." Unlike the Oxford, it allows the silent "e" to "likable," "aging," etc. Here I am on the Oxford side, as I am in the meaning given to "heart-whole." Odhams shockingly limits this to "unmoved by sexual love"; Oxford says—surely more comprehensively and truly: "undismayed, with the heart unengaged, sincere."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to D. K. R. Hodgkin.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Opening the meeting, the Rev. —— said he had been chosen as chairman because he was supposed to be impartial. He was a member of the Labour Party and also of the Conservative Party.—*Sussex Express and County Herald.*

When a Manchester man, with a handcart laden with bananas, had to go to the police station for causing an obstruction, his queue followed.—*The Lancashire Daily Post.*

The refusal of Miss Colman, M.P., to wear a hat in order to attend the Royal garden party I see as typically Labour in that she flouts tradition and would sweep away all that makes England noble.—Letter in *Daily Dispatch.*

Courting couples in many places are the worst menace to the country's food stocks.—*Bolton Evening News.*

Royal Visit to Mid-Cheshire: Reservations along the route will be made as follows . . . For the old and infirm residents accommodation forms will be provided at the Cemetery entrance in Chester Road, at the Quaker ground, Newton Bank, and in the churchyard.—*Winsford Chronicle.*

FERMENT IN INDIA—II

GETTING both the major parties to agree on entering the Constituent Assembly was a remarkable achievement. But, even on the assumption that the Viceroy will now succeed in forming an Interim Government within a reasonable time, we cannot sit back and imagine that there will be no difficulties in the administration of India in the transition period or that no new problems will arise during the constitution making. The very points that caused disagreement in the negotiations before and after the issue of the long-term statement on May 16th are bound to recur in varying degrees when the Assembly begins its deliberations. The signs are already visible. Nehru at the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Bombay has said: "We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided for the moment to go to the Constituent Assembly." The Muslim League, at a special meeting of the Muslim League Council on July 28th, are to review their decision to adopt the Mission's scheme in the light of Congress reservations about Grouping and the Mission's refusal to proceed with the proposed Interim Government of June 16th without Congress.

Doubtless these preliminary obstacles will disappear. But how far the divergencies will go in the Assembly itself depends largely on the willingness of the respective leaders to get something less than their maximum demands by peaceful negotiations rather than to chance all on force. There is every reason to hope that peaceful methods will prevail despite the pressure of the more exuberant elements on both sides. The alternative is one that must make responsible Indian politicians quail and determine them to exercise at least as much patience as they did during the Mission's stay.

But if a deadlock does occur it will undoubtedly fall to the lot of the British to take the initiative in resolving it and this time there will be no Cabinet Mission. Apart from the Viceroy there will only be permanent officials of the I.C.S.—already overburdened by routine work and overtired by the strain of the war years. This machine is well adjusted to a benevolent and autocratic administration but it is not adapted to sensing political fluctuations and dealing with popular movements. That is no more its affair than it would be that of the Civil Service at home. Once we had assumed the roles of conquerors in India instead of remaining traders and political advisers, with considerable influence, this development was inevitable. The steel framework dropped over India and administration could not afford to be other than rigid and unresponsive, particularly when the maintenance of law and order was of paramount importance.

But in this transition time we are going back to something like the early days of John Company. The methods of the Cabinet Mission were a foretaste of this reversion. It did not seek to dictate or to insist. It attempted to guide and to help and it used persuasion not coercion. It could only do this by keeping constant contact with the various leaders and sounding opinion at all levels. For the first time Indian leaders found themselves able to represent their views continually and informally to British authority. By this means suspicions were removed and friendly relations established. The atmosphere at the end of June 1946 bore no resemblance to that of March 1942. If the growing pains of the Constituent Assembly are to be eased it is essential that a similar process should continue. Time and tradition, as much on the Indian side as the British, are in league against the capacity of the present set-up accomplishing it. What is needed is a system of political liaison officers between the British and the Indians to assist the administrators in becoming more "Ministers Resident" and less "officials" who are of necessity out of touch with political thought.

These liaison officers are also needed to help the Indians bring home to the British the realities of their own internal problems. A demand from one side or the other, which out of its context appears unreasonable, is often made by leaders who wish to be moderate but have to satisfy forces in or even outside the party. If that is known, the demand will get a sympathetic hearing; if it remains inexplicable, it will meet with a frigid reception. Only those with political experience will appreciate, for instance, why the Congress insists on the absolute freedom of the Constituent Assembly from interference by the British and the right to advance its own interpretation of the Grouping system. It arises from the necessity to counter the Congress Socialists who complain that the British will pull the wires in the Assembly and that Congress should have had no truck with the Muslim League leadership but should have appealed over its head to the Muslim masses.

The same argument applies to the relations between the administration and the new Interim Government and Provincial Ministries. Admittedly in this case the fact that the civil servants are working direct for politicians should tend to break down the barriers more quickly. But here the transition period creates another difficulty. Many Europeans in the I.C.S. and Police feel that they are being put in an impossible position. As one policeman put it to me: "I've got 3,000 policemen working for me. There's only one thing that makes them reliable in any emergency and that is their loyalty to the British connection. It's all very well for your people to come out here from England for a month or so and make all these new arrangements. We've got to carry on with the job. You've told my men that the British connection is coming to an end. It's no good telling them to transfer their allegiance to Congress and/or the Muslim League straight away. They just can't do it. They were brought up to believe in the British connection. That's over and so now there's nothing to keep them reliable." Obviously there is no way of avoiding this kind of problem, but while Parliament still holds the ultimate responsibility of the Government of India through its agents, we should realise that we have of necessity weakened the instruments in the hands of those agents.

Many British administrators have nearly made up their mind not to stay in the new India, even if invited. They are only held there at present because of the rule by which no proportionate pensions are allowed to those retiring before January 1st, 1947. As soon as that date is reached they will leave unless they have found it possible to adjust themselves to the new conditions. They will go before all the good jobs have gone in England. That would be bad for India, which would certainly be hard put to it to do without key men from a Civil Service which has to run the whole of India on a staff far less than an unimportant British Ministry. On the other hand, only those civil servants will be asked to stay by the Indians who are capable of adopting the role of servants and advisers. On the number and quality of those will probably depend the closeness of our future relations with India. If at this juncture they can demonstrate the spirit of Henry Lawrence in the Punjab all would be set fair, and it is possible that India might even elect to give Dominion status a trial run.

WOODROW WYATT

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HOMAGE TO G. B. S.

A WELL-KNOWN English critic, who recently re-read the works of Bernard Shaw, wrote to me to express his disappointment in finding him after all "an indifferent artist." He added: "Maybe, it is my eyesight that is at fault, but what I see is a chaos of clear ideas; a devotion to mankind based on emotional indifference to human beings—plenty of wit. That's all." Surely a harsh judgment on the greatest prose writer and dramatist of our century. My response is to cry out that such a summary leaves out the most important aspect of Shaw—the personality of G. B. S. which has dominated his age as Voltaire's did the mid-eighteenth century. And that is what all the galaxy of stars who write* to celebrate Shaw's 90th birthday declare in unison—Sir Max Beerbohm, James Bridie, Bernal, Housman, Aldous Huxley, Joad, Dean Inge, Masefield, Gilbert Murray, Priestley and many others. These are the right people to pay homage to Shaw, for to the younger generation he has become a legend. To men old enough to have known Bernard Shaw between 1910 and 1930, he is, above all, the greatest "character" of this century.

When I last saw G. B. S., a few weeks ago, I found, to my delight, that he has changed very little. His eyes are as incredibly clear as ever and he still holds himself as splendidly upright though his legs trouble him on the stairs and he carries a stick. He has the same immense gusto and vivacity; his vitality has not withered. If you want to know what G. B. S. looks like at 90, you have not only excellent photographs in the birthday book, but also a volume of really admirable portrait studies of G. B. S. by Topolski.†

G. B. S. tells me that the thought of dying has become so familiar that he no longer thinks of it at all. He adds that he is bored with people celebrating his birthday, some of them even making the excuse of an outing to ask to come to bring him presentations. "I wrote and told them that I knew it would be a jollification for them, but that it would probably be the death of me." But he went further, explaining in detail his modest desire to have a Bernard Shaw Act of Parliament passed, the point of which would be to simplify the procedure by which people can pass property over to local authorities for some useful public purpose. "I think," he said, "the country owes me some recognition. I don't want to be a Knight and I can't afford to be a Duke, so I think they might give me a little Act of Parliament. I don't mind whether my name is attached to it or not."

The idea came to him when he wanted to dispose of some property in Eire. De Valera pushed a Bill through the Dail for this in record time. I wrote to ask how his negotiations were getting on with the British authorities. G. B. S. replies (in handwriting that is still firm and exquisite) as follows :—

> What I wanted and got in Eire was the Voluntary Civic Improvement Fund, which makes the municipalisation of property as easy as posting a letter, and cannot be stolen by the landlords by using it for the relief of the rates. I have demanded the extension of this to England instead of a title. The Chancellor is very civil, but thinks that the existing Local Government Acts provide for gifts to municipalities. Not within public knowledge simply and easily. De Valera put it through the Dail for me in thirty minutes instead of in the English thirty years.

The biographers of Bernard Shaw will have no awkward incidents to cover. The more his correspondence is disclosed, the better the light thrown on G. B. S. His passion for ideas is combined with a completely disinterested benevolence towards human beings. It is a universal, generalised benevolence; there is some justification for the critic's quip about emotional indifference to the individual. Probably his deepest friendship was with Beatrice and Sidney Webb, which has lasted without a break from the days when they were first associated in the Fabian Society in the Eighties until now, when Shaw is 90 and Sidney Webb 87. But if Shaw has had few intimate friends, innumerable friendships and millions of admirers, he has also made no enemies. The explanation is that Shaw's high spirits remove the sting of insult. The sneer inflicts a wound that does not readily heal. Shaw's boisterous abuse, full of good-tempered mockery, is like a high wind that blows the top-hat off a respectable gentleman, who must himself join in the laughter.

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* *G. B. S., 90. Aspects of Bernard Shaw; Life and Work,* edited by S. WINSTEN. *Hutchinson.* 21*s.*

†*Portrait of G. B. S.* By F. TOPOLSKI. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 42*s.*

All this explains why we love Bernard Shaw, but does not answer the critic's challenge. An indifferent artist? Time will show. I should say myself that many of Shaw's comedies, *Candida, Arms and the Man, You Never Can Tell,* will be constantly revived, as Sheridan is revived, and that in the Hell Scene of *Man and Superman* he rises to the heights of the world's great literature. Almost all his work will remain important to students of ideas. For this was Shaw's particular contribution to the British stage. He swept away the Victorian drawing-room comedy and, much influenced by Ibsen, introduced first the problem play and then his particular invention, the drama in which it is the ideas and not the characters that are dramatic. The extreme example of this is *Getting Married,* which is all talk and no action. This *genre* will have few successful imitators, because Shaw's gift of dialogue, penetrating and witty, is unique. Perhaps the most remarkable feat is to introduce into *St. Joan,* which in other Acts is the most dramatic of his plays, an hour of solid discussion of political theory. Audiences do not even shuffle their feet.

A chaos of clear ideas? Personally I find some consistent strains of thought throughout the works of G. B. S.—a point on which Dr. Joad enthusiastically agrees. To me the most interesting aspect of Shaw's thinking is his attitude to human history and progress. A historian of ideas is likely to see the "Life Force" as the working philosophy of a rebel (and Shaw is first and foremost a Protestant) who has discarded conventional religion and could not accept the automatic progress believed in by nineteenth-century materialists. It makes a useful distinction between the material world of mechanical forces which we cannot alter and the direction of human destiny which we like to think subject to our own will. Shaw's religion is a challenge to the imagination and effort which does not deny the possible regression of society, but which tells us that we can escape the doom which now seems so probable. The instruments of progress, in Shaw's view, are not ordinary men and women, but the exceptional heroes and saints who, as he explains in his book on Wagner, are usually put to death by the rational people who want law and order. There is much resemblance here between Shaw and Carlyle, though Shaw's heroes are not conquerors like Frederick the Great, but heroes of imagination and intellect like St. Joan, Shelley and, in his dramatic portrait, the matured Julius Cæsar. But this emphasis on the great man only too easily reinforces Shaw's mocking intolerance of ordinary human folly. Like Carlyle, he loathes the inefficiency and cruelty of the world, and inveighs against the accepted conventions and the authorities who maintain them. Therefore the early Shaw is the iconoclast loved by Radicals. Not content with destruction, Shaw worked like any Party hack for years as a Socialist lecturer and pamphleteer and found, as the Webbs did, the consummation of his hopes in Soviet Russia. Already a rollicking caricaturist of Western democracy, he saw the birth of a new civilisation and was not worried by doubts about personal liberty. Again as in the case of Carlyle, scepticism about ordinary people's capacity to govern themselves has tended to make Shaw a champion of authority. He even praised Mussolini, and at one time defended Hitler.

It would be easy to find pages of contradictions between Shaw the rebel, declaring that "the vilest abortionist is he who attempts to mould a child's character," and Shaw as champion of a Communist authoritarian education, between Shaw holding that a Socialist State must shoot those who do not work and Shaw saying, "Progress depends on our refusal to use brutal means even when they are efficacious." There is, I think, a real contradiction between Shaw's impatience to put the world to rights and his puritanical love of freedom. But it must be remembered that at no time has Shaw ever been a Liberal. He has always believed that government "by the people" is an absurd idea, and, though in practice the most Fabian and cautious of political advisers, his theory has always been revolutionary.

Shaw once said of himself that he "would never be a really great author because, just when he was about to achieve tragic heights, some absurd joke occurred to him and he could not resist the anti-climax." "I have got the tragedian and I have got the clown in me, and the clown trips me up in the most dreadful way." True, Shaw could never allow any of his characters or himself to get away with it. No sooner do you think you see the moral that he would draw than he finds some real or absurd objection to it, and turns his tragedy into a comedy and sometimes, alack, even into a farce. Often therefore, in his best plays like *Major Barbara,* you are left with a problem at the end which is quite unresolved. He must be fair to all his characters; no one may have the last word. Notice how he rings the curtain down on some deflating incident which perhaps leaves his hero intellectual master, but exposes him as humanly comic.

G.B.S. has done much to foster the illusion that he is not serious. Besieged by reporters, his method was to don the jester's coloured stockings, and make cracks about society and people which would set the world laughing, storming or even thinking. For when you sum it up, you see that Shaw in the last analysis is a great preacher, constantly preoccupied with the problems of religion and ethics, using the weapon of satire to sweep out of the way accumulated rubbish. Throughout he has remained benevolent and puckish, serious as well as witty, personally beyond reproach and without a tinge of enmity.

The other day when I saw him at his home, he accompanied me into the road and there in a burst of high spirits, sang in a clear voice, as he has done almost every day of his life in private, an operatic aria. "You see," he said, "even now my voice is no penny whistle." That certainly it never has been. It has been the voice, often of an angel, sometimes of an irresponsible sprite, but always potent to rouse men from lethargy, to entertain them, to make them think and to make them want to be more vividly alive.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

MESSIAEN AND BERKELEY

THE latter end of the Contemporary Music Festival was rather overshadowed by events at Glyndebourne; of the unfamiliar names, the only one to arouse violent feelings was that of Olivier Messiaen. In France, where M. Messiaen was born in 1908, his work has for some while been a focus of controversy; an ardent Catholic and a mystic, he has a considerable following, whose enthusiasm may owe something to religious as well as to purely musical reasons. All his works, even those ostensibly secular, are said to bear the impress of the Catholic faith; they are written in a strange musical language which he has expounded in a book, and which has been affected by his interest in four curiously dissimilar things: plain chant, quarter-tones, Hindu rhythms and bird song.

The *Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps* which was played at the Festival was, I think, the first work of consequence to be publicly given in London. It is a long work, lasting some forty minutes, scored for violin, 'cello, clarinet and piano, dedicated to the Angel of the Apocalypse, and divided into eight movements with such titles as *Liturgie de cristal* and *Abîme des oiseaux*. For a good deal of the time I could make little contact with the prolonged unison scurryings and tinkly splashes at the top end of the piano by means of which the composer expresses his vision. In the middle, however, there came a movement called *Louange à l'Eternité de Jésus* in a remarkably different manner: a serene 'cello *cantilena,* accompanied by piano chords in an undeviating four-square rhythm, which made a great impression by the skill with which the line was indefinitely extended without any apparent lowering of the tension. Whether this is something really profound and new, or merely the *salon* style *in excelsis,* is a nice question; at the end of the work, when a very similar effect was used again, only this time in the highest register of the violin, I could not help remembering that famous epigram of Romain Rolland: "Dans tous les coeurs français il y a un Massenet qui dort."

Far more valuable than most of the I.S.C.M. novelties was the *Piano Sonata* of Lennox Berkeley, which was played for the first time by Clifford Curzon last Monday. This composer has steadily advanced during recent years, and has by now wholly shed the triviality of style which that least trivial of musicians, Nadia Boulanger, so unaccountably instils into her pupils. The new Sonata is anything but slight; the first movement traverses an unusually wide range of feeling and harmonic adventure before reaching its enigmatic conclusion; and there is a solemn and beautifully fresh slow movement. The piano working, masterly throughout, reaches a brilliant climax in the *presto* with which Mr. Curzon scored an instantaneous success. Time and repetition will show whether the structure of the Sonata as a whole is as logical as its component parts are attractive.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

PLAYS

"Big Ben," at the Adelphi; "Huis Clos," at the Arts.

In the old days, the announcement of an A.P.H. musical piece promised the nicest of riverside nights. A deliberately old-fashioned-operetta treatment of an exactly contemporary theme . . . characters observed from contemporary life . . . neat tunes arranged to precise verses . . . a disarming mixture of light-hearted prejudice and stern broad-mindedness—all presented in a small riverside playhouse perfectly adapted to preserve the virtue and eliminate the vice of the best kind of private theatricals. At the Adelphi we are reminded that Sir Alan, the least pompous of celebrated men, has nevertheless dropped his amateur status with his initials, or at any rate temporarily mislaid it in the dignified machinery of the revolving stage. The theme is perfectly Herbertian. The Right Wing gent. falls in love with the Left Wing parliamentary lady. In Act I, the contest of Labour *versus* Tory is sustained with the utmost friendliness, with Mr. Fort (as a kind of Lord Woolton) genially opposed to Mr. Trefor Jones (as a species of Aneurin), and a very clever Miss Lizbeth Webb singing a delicate non-political descant to the theme song of the leading lady.

But in Act II *Big Ben* suffers a change of personality and becomes a Big Show. The question changes from the burning Red *versus* Blue to the lukewarm and nowadays pathetically abstract Wet *versus* Dry. The audience is reminded, during the odd moments when the rather feeble melodies are not being sung to pieces by such fine performers as Mr. David Davies, that light opera has a bad habit of turning into heavy farce.

It is a Cochran show: therefore every detail of lighting and chorus is rehearsed to the last inch; but our earlier Cochran would have felt it his sacred duty to surprise us, somewhere, with the work of the new artist or artiste, to give us some new smartness or elegance or even beauty.

Have you seen the famous Existentialist play at the Arts? To the up-to-date this means the *Huis Clos* of Jean-Paul Sartre, but what better *dicta* of its philosophy could be found than are spoken in the existential hell of Shaw's Don Juan. "To be in hell is to drift: to be in heaven is to steer," says Shaw. "Man is free to act, but he must act to be free," says Sartre. In *Huis Clos,* the three characters, three different kinds of egotists, have drifted over the precipice to their destruction. In the dead water beneath the cataract they drift aimlessly round for ever, enclosed in the claustrophobic purgatory of their own thoughts. With a touch of genius, Sartre has intensified the hellishness of his hell by confining it within the walls of a small, red-walled room in a third-rate Parisian hotel, furnished in dingy Second Empire, and breathing a stuffiness more agonising than the flames of Dante, or than Milton's ribbed ice. In spite of the beautifully sensitive acting (Mr. Guinness, Miss Lehmann and Miss Davis), the lives of the principal characters seem, from their own account of themselves, to have been too pathologically and therefore predeterminately damned from birth for us to be able to enhance our emotions with the necessary mood of fellow-feeling and compassion. STEPHEN POTTER

RADIO NOTES

IN the jealous game of Musical Chairs which our transmitters appear to be playing, who will be next man out is anybody's guess. I see it is "hoped" that the Third Programme (this title seems at last agreed) will be "effectively received by about 80 per cent. of the population." So far so good. But what about the remaining 20 per cent.? Urban listeners in the British Isles are not necessarily among the most cultivated. No doubt, the experts are doing their best in difficult circumstances; but it must be stated emphatically that the Third Programme is the B.B.C.'s last chance of proving its ability to furnish educated listeners with the kind of fare they really want.

It is disturbing to hear of the proposed merger of the West with the Midland stations. I dare say there are cogent reasons for this step; but I should have thought these might well be offset by the difficulty of devising a schedule equally acceptable to regions possessing habits of mind, traditions, and tastes which differ as widely as those of the South-Western counties and those of the industrial Midlands. The competition of the regions is one of the features of British broadcasting which are supposed to provide a better alternative to commercial networks; but this advantage will disappear if the regional programmes cease to be highly individualised.

I wonder how many Home Service listeners spotted the Cherubini *Requiem* broadcast from Wales on the 21st (I am ashamed to say that I noticed it too late to include it in my Recommendations last week)? Those who did will, I feel, agree with me that here was a most unjustly neglected work, full of rhythmic vigour and passages of classical beauty, sung with real fervour by the Morriston Orpheus Choir. One of the more interesting tasks of the Third Programme should be that of providing us with opportunities to decide, once for all, whether composers like Cherubini really deserve the almost total oblivion into which they have fallen. One would like to hear several of his symphonies and at least one of his operas, preferably *Medea.* Other composers needing revaluation include Spohr (especially the Double Quartets and concerti), Spontini, and Robert Franz. In the same connection I would urge the establishment, in the Third Programme, of big musical series: e.g., *all* Haydn's symphonies, *all* Wolf's and Franz's songs, and in order of composition. Any danger of boredom could be excluded by irregular spacing, and the musical interest of such an experiment could scarcely be greater, since most concert-giving institutions invariably omit (because they are supposed to have little popular appeal) just those works of a composer which the specialist most wishes to hear.

On the whole, the Proms programmes look fairly satisfactory. The old favourites are mostly there, as it is right they should be. Not enough Haydn symphonies, as usual. And why not a single one of Mozart's piano concerti, save those for two and three pianos? It is good to see Vaughan Williams's *Pastoral Symphony* back in the programme, after a lapse of some years. The general indifference to this masterpiece of English music (a recording of which is long overdue) is inexplicable. One is glad also to note that considerable chunks of Wagner are included in the schedule: this should be welcome to a younger generation which has never seen a Wagner opera performed on the stage and is unlikely to do so for some time to come. The novelties look more interesting than those given last season; I await with special impatience Lennox Berkeley's *Nocturne* (August 28th), the revised version of Britten's *Piano Concerto* (August 2nd), Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Weber* (September 3rd), and Strauss's *Oboe Concerto* (September 17th). The insertion of Shostakovitch's *Ninth Symphony* in the Light Programme on the first night of the season would seem to indicate that the B.B.C. have revised their infuriating habit of omitting novelties from the broadcast. Whether this is so or not, there will be no excuse for omitting anything next year, when the Third Programme is in full swing.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*Sunday, July 28th.* The Story of Italian Opera (11 a.m.); The Peace Conference (Harold Nicolson, 6.15 p.m.); Mr. and Mrs. Abbey's Difficulties (7 p.m.); Piano Recital (R Casadesus, 9.30 p.m.).

Monday. Promenade Concert (and every evening at 7 or 7.15 p.m.); Quarrel Island (9.45 p.m.)

Tuesday. Do Great Men Make History? (L.P., 10 a.m.); Casadesus (10.10 p.m.).

Wednesday. Democracy (Alan Bullock, 3 p.m.); Mozart Songs (Astra Desmond, 4 p.m.).

Thursday. Violin Recital (Telmanyi, 10 p.m.).

Friday. Lewis Mumford (9.15 p.m.); Caruso (10.30 p.m.). EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"Cluny Brown," at the Odeon

The new Lubitsch film arrives with the reputation of being the wittiest and most entertaining piece of its year. It is light-hearted and it has polish. It ought, one feels, given other circumstances, to be very amusing indeed. What circumstances? In the first place, a Broadway audience out for fun and knowing even less about England than do the makers of the film.

To such an audience it would seem appropriate that the Cockney heroine should be played by an actress American in speech, looks and gestures. Miss Jennifer Jones, who has loads of charm, makes no pretence of being other than she is. As Cluny Brown, the plumber's niece from Pimlico (is it?), she begins by fiddling with the pipes in a Mayfair flat, takes a cocktail too many and is rescued in time by her uncle (real Cockney—cribbed from Doolittle in *Pygmalion*); then, to be taught her place, she is packed off into service and arriving at the usual baronial manor is mistaken for a guest; drops the dish of mutton at dinner; becomes engaged to the village chemist (old-world shop: Cockney accent again); horrifies a company of tradesmen and their wives by proving her capability with the plumbing; and goes back to London in the arms of the Czech gentleman (Charles Boyer) who has been ogling her all the way from Mayfair to deepest Bucks or Berks.

It will be seen that situations depending for their fun on a fairly exact appreciation of English manners are fantastically wide of the mark. And the period of these adventures is even more shaky than the place. The characters belong to 1905 or thereabouts, and it is a shock to be reminded every now and then that we are supposed to be in the year of Munich. There is Mr. Boyer, famous Czech patriot and philosopher, who never touches a friend for less than £20 and who ends by marrying Miss Jones in New York and writing successful detective stories. What *he* is supposed to be, except Mr. Boyer, indefatigable confidence-trickster with women, I still cannot make out. He works a peculiarly vapid line of whimsy that is meant, I am afraid, to pass for wit. The general effect is almost equally ambiguous: one can't be sure, as the jokes turn out, whether this wouldn't be better as a parody of a funny film about England. It is something of a hybrid, and as such not unamusing. At moments, indeed, it makes us really laugh as we are intended to: when, for example, the adenoidal chemist begins to talk and introduces a mother who never gets further than scraping her throat. But as for the timing, the satire, the farcical aptness demanded by comedy, *Cluny Brown* never even begins to possess them. What would Broadway have made of *Blithe Spirit* if the wit had been taken out, American voices and characteristics dashed in, the scene changed to California, and the whole thing described as a brilliant reflection of American life? That is roughly how *Cluny Brown* looks from a stall in Leicester Square.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

INQUIRY INTO THE PRESS

SIR,—It may be as well, seeing that so many newspapers are assiduously trying to dismiss the proposed inquiry into the Press as a queer notion out of the mind of Mr. Herbert Morrison, to declare its origin.

It arose among Manchester journalists. Their branch of the National Union of Journalists put down a motion for the annual delegate meeting of the organisation in Liverpool last Easter. It strongly urged the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire specifically into:

(1) The ownership, control and financing of national and provincial newspapers, news agencies and periodicals.

(2) The extent to which the growth of powerful chains of newspapers is creating a monopoly of newspaper ownership.

(3) The ability of independent national and local newspapers to withstand increased competition from syndicate companies.

(4) The influence of financial and advertising interests on the presentation and suppression of news.

(5) The distortion and suppression of essential facts in home and foreign news.

The motion was proposed for the Manchester Branch by Mr. Reginald Smith, a notable Liberal journalist, and seconded by me, on behalf of the Central London Branch. It was debated and passed by the conference with one dissentient hand.

The public know little of the inside working of newspapers. You are right in suggesting that a Royal Commission would be an act of public education. The PEP private inquiry lasted several years and eventually had to confess itself baffled by its inability to get at essential facts. The sanctions of a Royal Commission would allow them to be disclosed. The nation would see clearly how the ordinary citizen's right of publication on which the so-called Freedom of the Press is based is exploited for commercial and political ends.

Suggestions that this is a move to nationalise newspapers and to implant State direction of newspapers are hoodwinking. A Commission, however, might propose important changes in ownership. It could investigate the value of trusteeship as a way out of the dangerous field of plutocratic control. The *Manchester Guardian* and the *News Chronicle* and their attendant papers are already in the care of privately-appointed non-profitmaking trustees. *The Times* is under the surveillance of a group of academic trustees. Trusteeship seems to be a useful way of preserving the independence of newspapers and it is worth noticing that it has been introduced to this end by owners noted for their independence.

Bouverie Street, E.C.4. PRESTON BENSON

B.A.O.R. WIVES

SIR,—The daily papers are full of information and predictions concerning the sort of life which awaits the B.A.O.R. wives and families when they arrive in Germany. But nobody mentions the nature of the arrangements which make it possible for them to live out here.

The small North German town in which I am at present working is crowded to saturation point with refugees from Poland, Prussia, the Baltic countries and the Russian Zone. The population has swollen to about three times its pre-war size. Many houses have already been requisitioned for use by the Army, and the people thus displaced are distributed through the town, living two, three and four in a room. Last week the evictions began from the houses which are to be prepared for the English families. The job was distasteful enough to the officer made responsible for it, and he has done much to alleviate the situation. The people were given several days' notice, and nobody was evicted until alternative accommodation was found. I have been personally connected with only one case, but I found it sad enough. A girl employed as cook by the scientific group for which I work came to me and asked me for help. She had a room in a flat belonging to an old lady of seventy.

and had heard they were to be evicted in two days. Everything in the house had been listed, and they were not allowed to remove a thing. I first found out about the situation at the local government H.Q., and then went round to see what could be done. The old lady was utterly bewildered and had been in tears; they wouldn't even let her take her father's photograph, she said. A young widow living in the same small flat with her baby asked me, could I please ask "them" to let her take her table and four chairs, all she had left besides the child's cot, after being twice bombed out and four times "moved on." I did what I could. They were allowed to take enough things away with them for their immediate needs, though only the old lady was able to take her bed. Then I went to see them settled in their "alternative accommodation." This was a house which had been used by soldiers. The lights don't work, the window and door frames are broken, and the front door won't lock—this in an area in which D.P.'s still come out at night to rob and murder. In the three rooms at the top of this house six people must sleep, eat and live, four in the only big room, one in a small one, and the mother and child in the third. There are no cooking facilities, and since they went there the mother has been unable to cook her child a meal.

Surely it is possible for some better arrangement than this to be made, or must we for ever play the role of *Herrenvolk* in the British Zone, committing the same offences against human rights and property which we have always been only too ready to condemn in the German occupation forces, and sowing seeds of resentment and discontent in the fertile mind of an already undernourished and badly housed population?

V. JABEZ-SMITH

POLITICAL MURDER IN CHINA

SIR,—Everyone who cares about China and intellectual liberty in general will have been horrified to read of the political murders in Kumming by the enemies of the Democratic League. I knew both of the victims when I was teaching there, and can testify to the simple and courageous way of living through the war years, shown by both Mr. Li King-Po and Professor Wen-Yi-tu.

Mr. Li had for long been a popular figure in student circles and was well-known for his outspoken and radical opinions. He came from a Christian university background, and was a favourite speaker at Y.M.C.A. Student Conferences in Kumming.

The death of Professor Wen-Yi-tu has removed an intellectual leader of the front rank. He was an authority on the Taoist classics, one of the most attractive lecturers and respected figures on the faculty of the National Southwest Associated Universities. His loss will be felt keenly by intellectuals in every country.

There is something particularly sinister and contemptible about the way in which these two men have been struck down by those who hate freedom more than they ever hated the Japanese. We, in the West, know just where this kind of political banditry leads. I would suggest that the best form of tribute to these liberal martyrs in China is for the universities and intellectuals of this country and America to urge most strenuously that the Chinese Government promptly disavow these crimes and see that justice is done. World opinion should make it clear at once that the Kuomintang must dissociate itself from all taint of political terrorism if it is to command any respect from honest people either in China or abroad.

GILBERT BAKER

MORALS AND POLITICS

SIR,—Mr. Archibald Robertson's letter is amusing, but childishly superficial. With a similar power of divination into the hypothetical past I state with confidence that if THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION had existed at the time of the French Revolution it would have whole-heartedly welcomed it, would have pointed out that some violence was inevitable in any revolutionary upheaval against a crusted tyranny, and then would have warned the revolutionaries that the effect of totally disregarding opinion abroad would bring disaster. When the disaster came with Napoleon and European war THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION would have been with Fox in still working for peace, but would also have pointed out that France had her share of the blame. In precisely the same way it is right to-day to work ceaselessly for peace with the Soviet Union, but no part of friendship and no sign of instability to point to the danger of regarding Moscow as infallible or beyond criticism.

J. B.

Sir,—The idea that a wicked principle, "the end justifies the means," is now being maintained by Marxists and other immoral people and is driving them to unspeakable villainies betrays a shocking ignorance of the plain fact that all moralists without exception hold that it is impossible to arrive at a moral judgment without taking the consequences into account. The immoral course is the one which, ignoring the balance of good results in the circumstances, judges solely by reference to a fixed code of morals. Koestler thinks that the former course leads to cruelty, but if human happiness is our end that is less likely than if it is not regarded at all. Do we not all know what misery may be caused by adherence to a rigid moral code which ignores the consequences of such obedience?

Not all moral rules reflect the general interest and none is unconditional (we may lie to save a man from being murdered). Even the most generally accepted principles require us to ask in any particular circumstances whether an exception is not required. Many moral rules, such as the sacredness of property, were actually formulated under special historical conditions and definitely reflect sectional interests, in this case those of the property owner. Such principles become an ideological defence against the overriding claims of human welfare. Such an end, however good, cannot be allowed to justify the breach of a moral law.

Arthur Koestler instanced Munich as supporting his argument. On the contrary, any far-sighted judgment could have seen the disastrous consequences of that betrayal. Those who supported it were either ignoring such consequences by clutching at *immediate* peace, a totally immoral course, or defending it on *pacifist* grounds, i.e. because interference with Hitler would have meant war, and war is an evil means, no matter how noble the end it serves or how just the cause. The end cannot justify the means—the defence of Czechoslovakia cannot justify war against Germany. War is in all circumstances wrong, regardless of the consequences of non-resistance. Here is another instance of the doctrine of absolute moral rules serving the political purposes of reaction.

But if we are to judge an action by its consequences, only the future, argues Koestler, can show us whether it is good or bad. But no moralist says that it is the future outcome that decides the moral quality of an action. What decides that is our intention as to the consequences, taking into account all the circumstances. (Good intentions coupled with avoidable ignorance, stupidity and lack of enlightenment are not enough.) Such an action is morally good whether it leads to desirable consequences or not—one is concerned with the moral quality of the man's own action and the only criterion of that is his most earnest desire to find out what the consequences will be. If he does his best then his action, even if he makes a mistake, is a moral one. So, at any rate, moralists have always believed and taught. Vice versa, if an action which *intends* evil nevertheless results in good, as sometimes happens, that does not make the action a moral one.

Koestler is perplexed at the spectacle of a Hitler who *believes* the end he has chosen to be a good one. Does not that justify any means he then adopts to attain that end? But surely a man can be wholly wrong about his chosen ends? In which case, however

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sincerely he believes he is right, that does not make his decision a moral one. The question of what constitutes a moral *end* is enormously important, but it lies quite outside the present discussion, which is concerned to ask whether *if* the end is *really* good then are the means which achieve it allowable. If then a man has chosen an evil end, it matters not how "sincerely" he believes himself to be right, the means he adopts to secure that end must be evil too.

40 Claremont Park, N.3. JOHN LEWIS

POPULATION

SIR,—Dr. Joad replies to my letter on his Swedish article by asking me certain questions. I will answer as shortly as possible.

In commenting on my statement that the Swedes are making great efforts to have more children, he says, "Quite so, but like anybody else they may want what is bad for them." I think I trust the Swedes after two Royal Commissions to have a surer idea of what is bad—or good—for them than the doctor.

Faced with a declining population they have taken steps not to try and increase their numbers, but to maintain them at stable figures. A sensible view and one I hope that we, confronted with a similar prospect, will emulate.

The original article dealt not only with demographic questions but with international policy. Dr. Joad asks, quoting me, why I should say that these international views of his would "be approved by . . . . the disciples of Marshal Petain." The dots are his and he uses them to suppress the words "isolationists, appeasers, and" which were in my letter. These words only have to be re-inserted to make my reference to Petain quite clear. L. J. CADBURY

MIHAILOVICH

SIR,—In a leading article you say:—

"In his final speech, Mihailovich seems to have spoken the truth. He was juridically guilty; he fought for lost and unworthy causes; he was responsible, directly or indirectly, for violent crimes against the emergent regime. He was swept away, as he says, in the maelstrom of history."

Nine people out of ten who do not know the facts will take these words to mean that in his final speech, Mihailovich admitted (1) that he was guilty, (2) that he fought for unworthy causes, and (3) that he was responsible for violent crimes. The fullest report of his speech known to me is given in *The Times* of July 12th. Neither in this, nor in any other report that I have seen, is there any indication that Mihailovich made any such admissions. If you have further information, you should publish it. If not, you should explain that you were only giving your own opinions, not Mihailovich's admissions. JOHN R. BAKER

[We apologise for the ambiguity. In his final speech Mihailovich does seem to us to have told the substantial truth. That he was juridically guilty; that his cause became unworthy (largely, according to him, because of the behaviour of the officers under his direction); that his organisation was guilty of violent crimes against the Partisans who were effectively fighting Hitler—these are not only our opinion, but substantiated, partly through Mihailovich's own admissions, during the trial.—ED. *N. S. & N.*]

BREAD RATIONING

Sir,—From the leading article "Bread and Propaganda" in your issue of July 13th, two passages may be extracted together. The first is: "Though the hectic agitation of the 'Housewives' League' seems to savour strongly of a Tory-engineered political stunt, there is, of course, much spontaneous feeling against bread rationing." The second: "Almost any fabrication can be got across as a fact by the simple device of not publishing the denial. For everyone believes that he only wants to hear the truth, but nearly everyone will accept as truth any unchallenged fiction which conforms to his mood." This second quotation is, I trust, a sufficient guarantee that you will publish my comments on the first.

The "agitation" of the British Housewives' League is not a Tory-engineered political stunt. It is simply a canalised expression of this spontaneous feeling against the Government's bread-rationing scheme. It represented the immediate reaction of hundreds of thousands of British women to a scheme which, in its original form, was muddled in detail, inequitable in its effects and without an understanding of the difficulties of those who would be the chief sufferers.

When the Smithfield workers upset the arrangements of a Socialist Food Minister by striking, were they accused of being Tory pawns? Is it surprising that housewives, faced with a vast flood of Government propaganda designed to foist on them what they sincerely believe to be an injustice, should seek strength to oppose it by united protest?

The League, which is strictly non-party and financed entirely by small subscriptions from its members, has no wish to be used by press or party as a political stick to beat the Government. Indeed, we are at present more directly concerned with the administration of the Ministry of Food than with the policy of the Cabinet. Further, we propose to make equally searching enquiries into the basis of glib promises of better conditions made by Tory election candidates.

The reason for the occasional presence on our platform of Conservative M.P.s is simple. When Government supporters refuse even to listen to criticism of a Government measure, the citizen can oppose it only through a member of the official Opposition. If any Labour M.P. would show any desire to hold a frank discussion at a meeting of one of our local branches, he would receive a sincere welcome and a sympathetic hearing. But they don't: they talk about "impertinent criticism" and a "Tory ramp."

Would it not be fairer—and simpler in the long run—to find out something about us and our aims and to co-operate, in however small a way? Because any political ostrich, of either party, who underestimates the potential power of hundreds of thousands of women consistently harassed, hectored or merely ignored, is one day going to receive a salutary shock.

You may have noticed that *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*, alone of the large national dailies, reported the presentation to Parliament of our "Tory-engineered political stunt." You see, we are not interested in being a nine-day press wonder. We have far too much to do. We are now settling down to a long period of constructive work on behalf of the housewife, in which the Conservative Central Office will no doubt take as little interest as Transport House.

M. H. LUFFINGHAM
Vice-chairman, Executive Committee,
The British Housewives' League.

SOCIALIST STUDENTS

SIR,—Mr. Pritt and Miss Hynds took good care in their letter last week to omit the fact that the Student Labour Federation has always been, and is at the present moment, dominated by Communist students. Nearly all officers, and certainly all recent paid officials of the S.L.F. have been members of the Communist Party.

Neither the British Labour Party nor the Socialist Youth Organisations on the Continent "recognise" the S.L.F. as representative of British Socialist Students on the international level. The S.L.F. is proscribed by the National Executive of the Labour Party. We believe that there must be a National Student Organisation whose membership is open to all Socialist Students eligible for membership of the Labour Party.

We can only congratulate Mr. Pritt and the C.P. on their past success in maintaining such an iron grip on the Student Movement of this country. This grip must be broken and a really democratic Socialist Student Organisation built up, taking as its basis the policy and ideals of the Labour Party. We hasten to reassure Mr. Pritt that our energies will continue to be directed to this end.

J. LOWY
R. L. MARRIS
F. L. TYLER

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METHUEN

BOOKS IN GENERAL

G. K. CHESTERTON was many things—perhaps too many: poet, journalist, literary critic, biographer, novelist, controversialist, apologist, legend. For thirty-six years his works poured from the press at the rate of anything from one to seven volumes a year. During this period his influence, if not deep, was certainly wide; like Shaw and Wells and Galsworthy, he was, as it were, a universal uncle, the jolliest of them all. He died ten years ago; and now a reprint of his first novel, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*,* offers one an opportunity of reviewing his work as a novelist.

To some extent one is anticipated by Chesterton himself:

> My real judgment on my own work is that I have spoilt a number of jolly good ideas in my time . . . I think *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* was a book very well worth writing; but I am not sure that it was ever written. I think that a harlequinade like *The Flying Inn* was an extremely promising subject, but I very strongly doubt whether I ever kept the promise . . . I think the story called *The Ball and the Cross* had quite a good plot . . . Considered as stories, in the sense of anecdotes, these things seem to me to have been more or less fresh and personal, but considered as novels, they were not only not as good as a real novelist would have made them, but they were not as good as I might have made them myself, if I had been really trying to be a real novelist . . . I could not be a novelist; because I really like to see ideas or notions wrestling naked, as it were, and not dressed up in a masquerade of men and women. But I could be a journalist because I could not help being a controversialist.

The analysis is accurate enough. But a passion for controversy, a desire to see ideas wrestling naked, even an impatience with ideas dressed up in a masquerade as men and women, have not prevented one or two writers—Peacock and Wells spring to mind—from being very considerable novelists. Nor, needless to say, is it his ideas that lead to Chesterton's failure as a novelist.

The Napoleon of Notting Hill was published in 1904, when Chesterton was thirty. He was in full reaction against the beliefs that had dominated the intellectual world of his youth: æstheticism, imperialism, Tolstoyism, Fabianism, and what is now called the scientific attitude. As he was to write in his poem to E. C. Bentley:

> A cloud was on the mind of man, and wailing went the weather,
> Yea, a sick cloud upon the soul when we were boys together.
> Science announced nonentity and art admired decay;
> The world was old and ended: but you and I were gay . . .

All these beliefs, it seemed to him, implied repulsive and inhuman Utopias. He has great fun with them in the first chapter of the novel; and the fun is still good, the satire still cutting:

> There was Mr. Cecil Rhodes, who thought that the one thing of the future was the British Empire, and that there would be a gulf between those who were of the Empire and those who were not, between the Chinaman in Hong Kong and the Chinaman outside, between the Spaniard on the Rock of Gibraltar and the Spaniard off it, similar to the gulf between man and the lower animals. And in the same way his impetuous friend, Dr. Zoppi ("the Paul of Anglo-Saxonism") carried it yet further, and held that, as a result of this view, cannibalism should be held to mean eating a member of the Empire, not eating one of the subject races, who should, he said, be killed without needless pain. His horror at the idea of eating a man in British Guiana showed how they misunderstood his stoicism who thought him devoid of feeling.

To these Utopias Chesterton opposed his own, the order of the Middle Ages, much idealised. It makes its first appearance in *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, in which Chesterton sets his own vision of the future against that of Wells. "When the curtain goes up on this story, eighty years after the present date, London is almost exactly like what it is now." Almost exactly; not quite. There are no small nations, no armed forces. England has become a sort of Fabian Utopia governed by benevolent bureaucrats. And the king is chosen like a juryman from the mass of ordinary citizens. The choice falls upon a young civil servant, Auberon Quin, "a man who cares for nothing but a joke . . . a dangerous man," whose first act as King is to promote "a revival of the arrogance of the old mediaeval cities (as) applied to our own glorious suburbs. Clapham with a city guard. Wimbledon with a city wall. Surbiton tolling a bell to raise its citizens. West Hampstead going into battle with its own banner." Walls encircle every suburb, each of which has its own ceremonial army dressed in mediaeval costume and armed with mediaeval weapons. And all this is nothing more than a nuisance until Adam Wayne takes the joke seriously and declares war on all the other boroughs in defence of the sanctity of frontiers, beats them, and establishes the empire of Notting Hill.

The passage of forty years has, of course, dated the novel. London in 1984 "is almost exactly like what it is now"; but London in 1946 is not much like what it was in 1904. Yet for the most part the book is still fresh and brilliant, brilliant in the strict sense of the word, gleaming and gay so that the London of the story is like a city built in children's newly painted bricks. Some of the satire has fallen away; but what is left is a dream irradiated with a poetry of its own and more vivid in its intensity than any other of Chesterton's novels. The book has a unity that he was never to achieve again, a unity of mood and impulse. For it sprang out of something very deep in Chesterton. Chesterton was a Londoner to the bone: Kensington bore him; and when, after his marriage, he went to live outside London he got no further than suburban Beaconsfield. In his *Autobiography* he relates an incident of his boyhood:

> I was one day wandering about the streets in part of North Kensington, telling myself stories of feudal sallies and sieges, in the manner of Walter Scott, and vaguely trying to apply them to the wilderness of bricks and mortar around me. I felt that London was already too large and loose a thing to be a city in the sense of a citadel . . . And something irrationally arrested and pleased my eye about the look of one small block of little lighted shops, and I amused myself with the supposition that these alone were to be preserved and defended, like a hamlet in a desert. I found it quite exciting to count them and perceive that they contained the essentials of a civilisation, a chemist's shop, a bookshop, a provision merchant for food and a public-house for drink. Lastly, to my great delight, there was also an old curiosity shop bristling with swords and halberds; manifestly intended to arm the guard that was to fight for the sacred street . . . And looking up, I saw grey with distance, but still seemingly immense in altitude, the tower of the Waterworks close to the street where I was born. It suddenly occurred to me that capturing the Waterworks might really mean the military stroke of flooding the valley; and with that torrent and cataract of visionary waters, the first fantastic notion of a tale called *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* rushed over my mind.

That boyish fantasy of an independent Notting Hill he translated with loving fidelity in all its pristine brightness of colour into a book which is and will probably remain unique.

And in Auberon Quin and Adam Wayne, "the two lobes of the brain of a ploughman," the practical joker and the fanatic, Chesterton comes nearer to creating character than in any of his other novels. They are, of course, twin aspects of Chesterton himself. In the novels that follow the fanatic disappears and the joker alone remains; the novels spring, not out of a dream, but out of jokes; and the jokes become progressively less good, more mechanical. There are brilliant comic passages, in *The Man Who Was Thursday*, and *The Ball and the Cross* particularly, and the basic ideas of both these novels are good: the idea that all the members of the European council of militant anarchists are Scotland Yard men in disguise; the idea that, in order to fight a duel on the most serious of subjects, an atheist and a Catholic must dodge the police of two countries and finally be prevented by being certified as insane. The latter might have been the vehicle for a profound satire; but Chesterton takes neither the art of fiction nor his own jokes seriously enough. He had no notion of the importance of construction or of the necessity of detail. We talk of realistic fiction; but all fiction, if it is to impose its illusion on the reader, must surely be circumstantial. The more fantastic the story the more realistic it must be, since, fundamentally, the art of the novelist is the art of lying convincingly. The archetypal patterns of fiction are still *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels.*

Chesterton makes no attempt to gain the credence of his reader: thus, in *The Ball and the Cross*, to account for the presence in the lunatic asylum of all who have helped the atheist and the Catholic, a revolution has to take place behind the scenes, as it were, in which the lunacy commissioners take over the government of England; to account for the string of anti-teetotal drinking songs that is the *raison d'être* of *The Flying Inn*, a Turkish conquest of England must be assumed. The arbitrary is the enemy of art; and in lieu of attention to construction and detail, which is the cement of construction, Chesterton relies more and more on improvisation and verbal play to carry the reader along with him; on these and on high spirits, the excessive display of which finally has on the reader the exacerbating effect of a small boy dragging a stick along corrugated iron palings.

Chesterton might have been a great satirist. He had much of the necessary equipment, and his early satirical poems still bite. His ideas were of the utmost importance. He writes in his *Autobiography*: "I believe that the suggestion that the modern world is organised in relation to the most obvious and urgent of all questions, not so much to answer it wrongly, as to prevent it being answered at all, is a social suggestion that really has a great deal in it." But equally, the organisation of his own novels is such as to prevent the most obvious and urgent questions being answered at all. And on this the *Autobiography* again throws light:

> I deal here with the darkest and most difficult part of my task; the period of youth which is full of doubts and morbidities and temptations; and which, though in my case mainly subjective, has left in my mind for ever a certitude upon the objective solidity of sin . . . But I am not proud of believing in the Devil. To put it more correctly, I am not proud of knowing the Devil. I made his acquaintance by my own fault; and followed it up along lines which, had they been followed further, might have led to devil-worship or the devil knows what. On this doctrine, at least, there is, mingling with my knowledge, no shadow of self-satisfaction any more than of self-deception.

This dark experience, which is stated in general terms, finds no place in his novels. He organised his work, one would say, deliberately to avoid consideration of it. Instead of confronting the Devil, he confronts cocoa—"Cocoa is a vulgar beast." Faced with "the objective solidity of Sin," he was determined to be jolly in all possible circumstances—and Mark Tapley has not been the most enduring of Dickens's characters. And the faith that in our time has produced the novels of Mauriac and Bernanos and Graham Greene produced in Chesterton merely a number of increasingly perfunctory improvisations which might almost lead the non-Catholic reader to believe that the papacy had been transferred to Burton-on-Trent.

We have it on the authority of Mr. Connolly that "imprisoned in every fat man a thin one is wildly signalling to be let out." Was there a thin man in Chesterton? Well, there are signs of him in the *Autobiography*, so thin as almost to be a skeleton in the cupboard. He spoke out once, in *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, loudest in the superb last pages. After that, in the novels at any rate, he never had a chance.

WALTER ALLEN

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* *The Napoleon of Notting Hill.* By G. K. CHESTERTON. *Penguin Books* 1s.

SOME SPANISH POETS AND OTHERS

St. John of the Cross and Other Lectures. By E. ALLISON PEERS. *Faber.* 15*s.*

This book consists of some fifteen lectures delivered by Professor Peers at various times between 1928 and 1940—all but two of them on Spanish writers. The longest is on St. John of the Cross, and it is followed by a number of appendices in which he brings his earlier conclusions up to date. Let us consider this first.

John of the Cross's reputation rests chiefly upon his being the most unalloyed and uncompromising of Catholic mystics. For most Englishmen this has obscured the fact that he is also one of the greatest lyric poets who ever lived. This double greatness and the fact that his poetry has characteristics that recall modern poetry—for example, the peculiar nature of its symbolism—make any study of him both important and difficult. Professor Peers, whose great output of books forbids prolonged concentration on any one subject, has wisely not attempted a sustained analysis, but his essay is pleasant and informative and contains some excellent observations. Those who wish for further enlightenment can go to Jean Baruzi's exhaustive work on San Juan's life and mystic experience or to Damaso Alonso's recent brilliant study of the poetry.

The real criticism I have to make of Professor Peers—and this applies to others of his books also—is a habit he has of toning down or skirting round or simply omitting anything that he regards as painful or unedifying. At such moments he averts his gaze from the horrid confusion of the world beyond the study window and fixes it on the private doll's house of his imagination, where the good are always good and the wicked always wicked. Or let us say, he tends to do this, especially when he is discussing the subject he appears to like best—the world of religion.

Let me give an example from this essay. The Reformed Carmelite Movement started by St. Theresa in 1562 was the great spiritual movement of the Spanish Counter-Reformation. It filled the next thirty years with an excitement that sprang from a belief in the possibility of discovering new continents of untapped opportunity and experience within the human mind. Sitting cross-legged in their cells or kneeling in their chapels, the followers of St. Theresa, who were by no means all of them monks or nuns, set out on private voyages that seemed even more arduous and daring than those of Columbus. In France Montaigne was making voyages of a similar kind, though in coastal waters, and Descartes, who of all modern philosophers is closest to the mystics in his method, was soon to follow. Yet from 1571 on this movement had to face the most bitter opposition from the conservative forces in the Church and State, which saw in any sort of religious enthusiasm something heretical and semi-Protestant. St. John of the Cross was thrown into prison, whipped and starved. Only St. Theresa's irresistible personality prevented the suppression of her Order and possibly the liquidation of its leading personalities by the Inquisition.

Then in 1582 she died. At once the opposition gained power. Nicolas Doria, a Genoese financier who had become a priest, was—probably through Philip II's influence—made Provincial of the Order, and he at once set out to destroy St. Theresa's work and to reduce the Reformed Carmelites to the dead level of monkish bureaucracy and worldly utility that the authorities wanted. (One sees here the beginnings of the Jesuit conception that religion is, above everything else, politics.) The priors whom St. Theresa had appointed were dismissed and persecuted and St. John of the Cross was banished to the hermitage-convent of La Peñuela—which incidentally was not, as Professor Peers says, in the Sierra Nevada, but eighty miles away in the Sierra Morena, close to the pass of Despeñaperros. There is every reason for thinking that an indictment was being prepared against him by the Inquisition when he died. His letters and private papers were destroyed because it had become dangerous to possess them and his chief books have come down to us in a mutilated form. In short, what had happened to the Franciscans on the death of their founder was repeated much more decisively and effectively in the case of the Carmelites.

Now how does Professor Peers speak of this tragic Thermidor (to use a revolutionary expression), which was part of the general movement of spiritual and intellectual damping down that led to the Spanish decadence? In these words:

> Before long . . . the Carmelites find themselves suffering from the pains inseparable from development.

The essays that follow, on Ramon Lull, Luis Vives and Lope de Vega, are all interesting and the student of Spanish things will be glad of four others on the writers of the Catalan Nationalist Movement, among them the important poet Maragall. But the one I find most valuable is that on Antonio Machado. Machado—he died in exile in 1938—is one of the two outstanding poets of modern Spain. His position with regard to the generation of Garcia Lorca is very much that of Yeats to Eliot and Auden. His poetry is too bare to stand translation, but the English reader who wishes to breathe the air of Castile should read it. In Spain foreigners have often been the best interpreters of the national spirit and Antonio Machado was an Andalusian who adopted the bleak *parameras* of Soria as his native land. Professor Peers's essay provides a useful introduction.

GERALD BRENAN

THE REPETITIONS OF HISTORY

The Congress of Vienna: A Study in Allied Unity, 1812–1822. By HAROLD NICOLSON. *Constable.* 18*s.*

It is a considerable feat to make the Congress of Vienna as entertaining as Mr. Nicolson has succeeded in making it in this book. He has made the Congress which produced the peace of 1815 even more entertaining and vivid than his eye-witness description of the Congress at which he himself helped to make the fatal peace of 1919. The secret of his readableness is his unerring eye for the small amusing absurdities, the incongruous oddities, the psychological antics which are the background and scenery of the stage upon which the solemn muse of history plays her most tremendous tragedies. To unearth the material for this aspect of past events one usually must go to memoirs and autobiographies and of these Mr. Nicolson is an assiduous reader; indeed he always writes history with one eye upon biography. When one has finished his book it is perhaps these biographical trivialities which remain most persistently in one's memory of it: the Grand Duchess Catherine's remark about the Emperor of Austria, when she was thinking of marrying him: "He may be dirty, but I can wash him"; the appalling incidents of her visit to London with her brother, the Tsar Alexander, in 1814; his vignettes of the protagonists of the Congress, Metternich, Talleyrand, and Castlereagh; his snapshot of the Duke of Wellington, "who was sensitive regarding his profile," trying to persuade the painter, Isabey, to paint him full face, and of Isabey overcoming the Duke's objections by assuring him that side face "he bore an astonishing resemblance to Henri IV."

As with broadcasting, so with history Mr. Nicolson has developed an extraordinarily deft and mannered technique for doing what he wants to do or for saying what he wants to say. It has its dangers or pitfalls—e.g. "the Grand Duke Constantine, that insane hyena,"—but Mr. Nicolson is so skilful and alert that he rarely falls into them. But then the skill is apt to become a danger, particularly to the reader. It all runs on so smoothly and amusingly that one tends to be content with the surface of entertainment and thus to miss the tougher and serious history below it. There is in fact a solid core of history there. Mr Nicolson himself describes his book as "an examination, in terms of the past, of the factors which create dissension between independent States temporarily bound together in a coalition." It is an accurate description, and it should be added that the book is also an examination, in terms of the past, of the difficulties which beset Great Powers when they have to make a peace after a great war. To deal adequately with this hard, solid core requires in the writer much tedious, dusty historical work, and it is clear that Mr. Nicolson has not shirked it. Even when one may not agree with his larger historical judgments and interpretations, one has to admit that he knows what he is talking about. It is impossible to write or read about the Congress of Vienna and the peacemaking of 1814 and 1815 without continually thinking of the Versailles Treaty and the peacemaking of 1946. In fact the book gives one a curious feeling of a double superimposition of the past upon the present, of watching 1814 being superimposed upon 1919 and then both superimposed upon 1946. And all three fit as if they had been cast in the same mould. The repetitions of history are devastating and statesmen seem to be the last people who ever learn from experience. In October, 1814, when Talleyrand first discovered in Vienna what the Big Four of the victorious Allies had so far done for making peace, he said of them that they were "too frightened to fight each other, too stupid to agree." Might he not have said the same of the Big Four in Paris in 1919 and of the Big Three in Paris a few weeks ago? That leaves us with the all-important question: Why does history repeat itself so fatally? Why should great statesmen, on matters of supreme importance to the whole human race, three times in 130 years prove themselves "too stupid to agree"? The answer will be found, I suspect, in the psychology of power, which never changes. The statesmen of Great Powers think in terms of the psychology of power, and one of their marked characteristics is that they have forgotten the terrible truth which most of us learnt in the nursery: "You cannot eat your cake and have it." To Talleyrand, who was much too old and cynical to forget such nursery truths, Alexander, Metternich, and Castlereagh seemed stupid simply because they were acting on the assumption of power politics that you can eat your cake and still have it.

LEONARD WOOLF

SHORT STORIES

Selected Tales. By A. E. COPPARD. *Cape.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Collected Stories of T. O. Beachcroft. *John Lane.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Penguin New Writing. No. 27. ED. JOHN LEHMANN. 1*s.*

Twenty, thirty years ago, how much of our literature came out of the English countryside. It had two aspects: the one lowering, muddy, gnarled, eccentric; the other bright with summer lawns, faithful gardeners and well-bred children; both too emphatic to be natural, for the writers were not the John Clares or Stephen Ducks of the age but transplanted or nostalgic town dwellers. Indeed, the Georgian verses, the rustic tales and novels—late shoots of that most persistent literary convention, the pastoral—belong so inevitably to those years that it is impossible to consider them justly out of their time. Mr. Coppard's stories, fanciful and homely, unmistakably English, are a product of this period, and though this selection covers over fifteen years of his writing, we can see that his manner has not greatly changed.

Mr. Coppard has the qualities of a successful story teller; he can vary his pace, though he prefers to be leisurely, even deliberately rambling; he does not stop short at a documentary sketch but presents a rounded situation; his characters are vivid during their dragon-fly moment of life. Moreover, he is not detached; he can be tender, pitying, malicious. However, after reading his book one is conscious of a feeling of unease. This, I think, is because his characters are so often the odd, the solitary—people who have not made strong links between themselves and the world. They evoke the attic bedroom, the bachelor lodging, the lonely shack in the woods, the childless cottage. They are not part of common experience.

Yet the strangeness of the people does not prevent the situations from having truth. *Fifty Pounds*, for instance, which is about that impossible subject for fiction—a writer, deals with the effect of a small, yet wholly important deception; even so queer a story as *Doe* shows how one personality, an old clergyman, can influence another, his unbelieving friend, who eventually acts as a kind of lay clerk. Mr. Coppard's best stories, *Fifty Pounds, The Old Venerable, The Field of Mustard, The Higgler, The Cherry Tree, Christine's Letter*, are studies of characters, sensitive, sad, not unduly fantastic; his worst, such as *Speaking Likeness*, an arid imitation of Hans Andersen, suffer from his inability to restrain his taste for the whimsical, and consequently for the grotesque. For if charm is the one side of fantasy, the other is horror. The "charming" side of Mr. Coppard's fancy comes out in *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me*, in which a man has a vision of his unborn child; the horror in a detestable little story *The Mouse*. It is suggested, too, in others which are not in themselves unpleasant. For though the doors are shut, the curtains drawn, we know that outside the Coppard cottage are loneliness, frustration, failure, bad dreams—all the ingredients of nightmare. *The Field of Mustard*, which describes three work-roughened women gathering kindling wood on a November afternoon, expresses this in the women's conversation and in the conclusion:

> The wind hustled the two women closer together, and as they stumbled under their burdens Dinah Lock stretched out a hand and touched the other woman's arm. "I like you, Rose, I wish you was a man." Rose did not reply. Again they were quiet, voiceless, and thus in fading light they came to their homes. But how windy, dispossessed and ravaged, roved the darkening world! Clouds were borne frantically across the heavens, as if in a rout of battle, and the lovely earth seemed to sigh in grief at some calamity all unknown to men.

Mr. Coppard can describe with pensive detail—the gander in *The Higgler*, for instance—or lightly catch a passing character:

> Oh, and Mrs. Lassiter, the wife of a sea captain far away on the seas; yet she was content, and so, by inference, was the sea captain, for he never came home. There was a dearth of colour in her cheeks, it had crowded into her lips, her hair, her eyes. So young, so beautiful, so trite, there was a fragrant imbecility about her.

But he is too consciously a writer. He is literary, preoccupied with words; he likes the startling simile which so often misses its effect, and he is capable of such passages as this:

> But still, there was a god in the sky, a god with flowing hair and exquisite eyes, whose one stride with an ardour grandly rendered took him across the whole round hemisphere to which his buoyant limbs were bound like spokes to the eternal rim and axle, his bright hair burning in the pity of the sunsets and tossing in the anger of the dawns.

And, like Mr. W. H. Davies' tramps, the most varied characters speak in the poetic voice of the author.

Now Mr. Beachcroft has not one but many voices. Such a chameleon is he that we cannot tell when, where, what he is; only that he is a very able writer, and that he is wise. For, in spite of the variousness of his subjects they have a common element in their truth to life. He writes of the working lives and problems of doctors, stokers, athletes, factory hands, shepherds, parents, children, wives, husbands, and with a simple authenticity that suggests that he is either very artful or has the kind of fluid personality that some major poets have considered desirable in a writer. But they are all people who have roots in a living world, and the reader is all the time conscious of this world. Painful his stories may be, *The Sergeant-Major*, for instance, and *The Young Against the Old* (here a boy races against a former champion runner, and later reveals that he has allowed the older man to win), but they are not sinister or grotesque. Mr. Beachcroft faces the catastrophe; we know the worst; nothing lurks.

As one might expect, Mr. Beachcroft has a gift for dialogue. He tells his stories briskly and economically, but the imagination is there, though it is not precious or bookish. Because of this control, the dramatic stories, such as *Old Hard*, and *The Erne From the Coast*, an account of a boy's fight with an eagle, have a moving intensity. One of his most attractive qualities—not a sentimental one—is his power of sympathy, which comes out in his wise stories on marriage, and in his studies of old people. *Mother is so Wilful* and *Old Women Are Tough* present most effectively the problem of inarticulate, stubborn, independent old age. These and many of the stories in this excellent collection are worth a second reading; certainly, they all deserve a first.

The latest *New Writing* appears in a leaf-green cover, nicely decorated, and with an impressive list of contributors on the contents page. There are several colour reproductions and other illustrations, and there are new poems by Edith Sitwell, Louis MacNeice, C. Day Lewis and Stephen Spender. (Mr. Day Lewis writes words to two Irish airs and Mr. MacNeice's *Streets of Laredo* is a ballad which only needs a tune; these stir one agreeably.) A Sansom story, *How Claes Died*, is the more effective because it never quite goes over the border of the unconscious, as this author's stories generally do. Two of the most valuable contributions are personal accounts of poets; Osbert Sitwell on Wilfred Owen, and a slighter sketch of Alun Lewis by J. MacLaren-Ross. It is melancholy to think how few such revealing notes we have from contemporaries of past writers. The critical section includes a survey of the London Theatre between 1918 and 1945 by Stephen Potter, and an Orwellian account by John Hampson of "underworld" literature. In the fourth instalment of *From a Painter's Notebook* we find again a stimulating mind stinging us with new ideas. This edition, it seems to me, does not differ greatly from the past few numbers (which have been excellent, particularly in the critical sections). But it is presented with a gusto that suggests that the standard will not fall in future issues.

NAOMI LEWIS

SIDELIGHTS ON WAVELL

Speaking Generally. By GENERAL SIR ARCHIBALD WAVELL. *Macmillan. 7s. 6d.*

Allenby, Soldier and Statesman. By FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT WAVELL. *Harrap. 15s.*

In one of his lectures to fellow P.o.W.'s in Germany, recently printed, Mr. Montgomery Belgion selected as an example of good plain English prose an Order of the Day issued by General Wavell, as he then was, during the first astounding North African campaign. There is more of the straightforward stuff to be found in the volume of his speeches and broadcasts (before becoming Viceroy) now issued; and the celebrated and soldierly reserve which inspires on occasion a satisfying economy of phrase is perhaps reflected also in the relatively small bulk of *Generally Speaking*, which in a hundred and sixty-six pages covers "practically the whole of my public utterances during just under four years as a

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ROUTLEDGE

Commander-in-Chief," that is to say from 1939 to 1943.

The first two years in the Middle East carried Wavell's military reputation to heights of solitary splendour, despite the eventual failure in Greece and Crete and the retreat to the Egyptian frontier (" I did not think," he subsequently told the Defence Consultative Committee in India, " that the Germans could transport an armoured force across to Libya and bring it against us as quickly as they did.") Then came the exchange of commands with Auchinleck and, as far as the preoccupied British public was concerned, a period of virtual eclipse as Commander-in-Chief in India, briefly and calamitously punctuated by the South-West Asia assignment. That assignment, the loss of Singapore and the two great warships, the Japanese tidal wave that poured in to lap the frontiers of India, may one day, when we are all bored with other aspects of the war, receive an important part of its documentation from Wavell's own pen. In his public pronouncements in India, even in his periodical and, at the time, confidential statements to the National Defence Council in New Delhi, it gets a few sidelights, but that is all. Nor could one possibly grasp from this collection what it meant to be responsible for India's defence throughout 1942, the year of Singapore, the Cripps Mission, the August Resolution and the " disturbances," or " open rebellion," whichever name is preferred for the most explosive turn of events and attitudes since 1857. The pieces reproduced, exactly as they were written, are described by Wavell as " snapshots of my mind, not posed photographs." He has not deleted statements that read rather oddly after the event, such as that to Australian troops in February 1940 that " the third menace to our interests is an advance by Russia into Iran and Iraq," and a little later that " it is safe to say that co-operation between Allies has never been closer than between France and Great Britain." The clichés of war-time propaganda, into which we all fell in some degree, are not lacking. But there are memorable utterances also, among which I would draw attention to the broadcast from Delhi on April 21st, 1942, which I happen to know had a steadying effect in India at a time of considerable peril and when the words of a British C.-in-C. could not be expected to find an uncritical audience. A particular interest attaches both to the tone and the matter of Wavell's addresses and statements to the National Defence Council from October 1941 onwards, and there are also some very characteristic notes for officers, including a brief essay on " Ruses and Stratagems of War," packed full of historical instances.

The biography of Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby of Megiddo and Felixstowe by Field-Marshal Viscount Wavell of Cyrenaica and Winchester has been praised before in the two volumes in which it first appeared. It is now reprinted, with some slight omissions from the earlier part, in a single volume, and there are two very topical reasons for turning to it again. Even if we have little time for the study of the classics of military history, of which Allenby's Palestine campaign is a worthy one, Egyptian politics have been forced upon our attention, and I know no better short introduction to the present problem than Wavell's treatment of Allenby's disputed proconsulate. There are passages in Chapter XII, " A Nation's Anger," which apply with equal force to-day, and with equal force to other nations whose anger so many bewildered people find tiresome or unjustified. Beyond this there is the light thrown by these later chapters on the author himself, whose career in the East from soldier to proconsul has followed with no little significance that of his subject. When the New Delhi Secretariat was worried, as it often has been, as to what Wavell was doing or about to do over in the Viceroy's House, it used to be said : " Look up his life of Allenby." There is, of course, a good deal more to it than that, but it does not take a very discerning reader of this biography to discover some of the reasons why Wavell's viceroyalty has thus far proved so different from that of his predecessor

FRANCIS WATSON

THE NATURE OF LAW

Some Reflections on Jurisprudence. By W. W. BUCKLAND. *Cambridge University Press.* 6*s*.

In this period of earthquakes it is soothing to find Professor Buckland speculating in a highly abstract way on Jurisprudence. Certain reflections, however, are topical in point, as, for instance, the following remarks on the State :—

> This seems to mean that in a typical State the governmental system is able to endure because it is approved by the mass of the people, or, if they do not positively approve it, yet, by reason of their love of country and desire for maintenance of their national life, they are prepared to put up with it. This may be true, but, if said of all States, it is a fiction.

The book contains the substance of lectures delivered several years ago and articles in the *Cambridge Law Journal* and the *Law Quarterly Review*. It has some brilliant passages, as, for instance, about the Law of Nature and Nations.

> This law of Nature has been very differently conceived at different times. For the Romans, who took it over from the Greek philosophers and gave it a juristic turn, it was no more than an ideal, hardly more than a rhetorical ornament. But the *ius gentium*, which was at first merely the informal part of the Law, which could be applied to *peregrini*, came to be thought of as universal, and this tended to be confused with the *ius naturale*. In the Middle Ages the fusion was complete and *ius naturale* came to be a test of the validity of law. By the time of the Reformation there was a further confusion of the *ius gentium* with *ius inter gentes*, and thus *ius naturale* came to play an important part in the formation of modern international law. The final step was taken when, in the seventeenth century, a Chair of International Law was founded at Heidelberg and called the Chair of the Law of Nature and Nations, a title which Pufendorf, the first professor, gave to his book.

There are some interesting discussions on points raised in the Pollock-Holmes correspondence.

In my Oxford days I used to complain of the absurd veneration for any German writing on any subject, and my only supporters on this point were York Powell and H. Belloc. This cult of Germany seems to have survived at Cambridge judging from the numerous quotations from such writers as Krabbe, e.g., " Krabbe maintains that we have a *Rechtsgefühl* which can be refined into a *Rechtsbewüsstsein*, analogous to the moral sense *Sittengefuehl*, and that this tells us what is *Recht*." By this time we know only too well how much respect the German has for *Recht* !

E. S. P. HAYNES

Week-end Competitions

No. 861

Set by Raymond Mortimer

Sir Waldron Smithers, M.P. for Orpington, found himself last Monday broadcasting in the company of four speakers who were actually Socialists, two of them, moreover, being French! " The atmosphere in the studio," he complains, " was terrifying. I felt I was in the presence of evil, which made it all the more difficult to express myself adequately." Competitors are invited to submit rhymed spells with the help of which other members of the Stock Exchange may, in similarly alarming circumstances, exorcise the powers of evil and recover the power to express themselves. Limit sixteen lines, entries by August 6th.

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Report by G. W. Stonier

It hasn't been easy to decide which entries most deserve a prize: those that amuse most in themselves or those that would be most likely to fit into an actual Itma programme. In the end, I decided for the first, thereby giving up such radiant possibilities as Annie Flugge (a chatterbox, who breaks china), Sterry O'Type (a master of Irish Bulls), Percy Flage (capping everything with rhyme), and a frantic Scriptwriter, who interrupts Handley imploring him to read what he has just written. A first prize of four guineas to R. J. P. Hewison, and second prizes of a guinea each to W. Stewart and Aubrey Herbert.

Dr. Psykes the Psychiatrist.

Handley—. . . all of a dither.

(Door bangs.)

Psykes—This is where I come in. Handley, how am I? You're fine.

Handley—Well, who am I, anyway? You don't know me. I mean——

Psykes—You mean, I don't know you. But I do. I'm Dr. Psykes the Psychiatrist.

Handley—Trick-cyclist, huh? How's tricks, Psicks? I mean, how's trykes, Psykes?

Psykes—This is where I come in. You mean, how's sicks, Trykes?

But I play no pranks. I practise proudly as a practical, professional practitioner. I read your mind. I can tell you things——

(Loud music.)

Handley—But I was only about three then. What about when——

(Loud music)

No! Well, what's to do?

Psykes—This is where I come in. First you pay five guineas.

Handley—Ye-es. Then?

Psykes—I treat you.

Chinstrap—Treat me, sir? Excellent wheeze.

Handley—Not you, Psoaks: pipe down. How?

Psykes—Here's how——

Handley—Wrong again, Colonel.

Psykes—I analyse you.

Handley—Anna Liza who?

Psykes—No. Release repressions—unravel complexes ——

Handley—Not my last pair, you don't. How long will this be going on?

Psykes—Shall we say three years to begin with?

Handley—How much?

Psykes—Shall we say three hundred guineas to be going on with?

Handley—Shall we say this is where you go out, with *that* to be going with?

R. J. P. Hewison

Andy Adenoid: The New Office Boy.

Handley—Now, why do I feel so depressed this morning?

Andy Adenoid—It's be, sir, Addy Adedoid, your dew office boy. Good bordig, sir.

Handley—Good Lord, so that's it! And what's the matter with you? Have you lost your bread coupons?

Andy—Do, sir. Cad I 'ave the afterdood off, sir?

Handley—Holidays with pay already, eh? Why: is your grandmother dead?

Andy—Yessir. The funeral's this afterdood.

Handley—Where's the cemetery: Wimbledon or Lord's?

Andy—I 'ave'd bade up be bide yet, sir.

Handley—Well, you can't go. You've got to be here a fortnight before you're entitled to a dead grandmother.

Andy—Oh, sir, you'll be sorry.

Handley—What! *I* will?

Andy—Yessir. I throw the igk aboud subthigk awful whed there's a death id the fably. Break things, too, I do. Orrid dervous, I ab.

Handley—Andy, my lad, this is sheer blackbail—I mean blackmail. I've a good mind to hand you over to Hotchkiss.

Hotchkiss—And how right you are, Mr. Handley. I shall deal with him. Come, boy!

Andy—'Ere, this is kid-dappid, this is. This ai'd Balestide, is id?

W. Stewart

Introducing Pending-Tray, Alias Dadpa.

Handley—Well now I must get on with my swimming bath.

Enter—Pending-Tray.

Middle Grade Civil Servant.
Cocky, brusque, Scots accent.

Tray—Have you got your licence?

Handley—What do you think I am? An armorial bearing? Who are you, anyway?

Tray—My name's Pending-Tray. I'm a D.A.D.P.A. in the Ministry.

Handley—D.A.D.P.A.? What on earth's that?

Tray—Deputy Assistant Deputy Principal Assistant.

Handley—Well, I'm a Dadpa, too.

Tray—Have you got your licence?

Handley—No, but my wife's had triplicates.

Tray—I mean a licence for your swimming bath.

Handley—Of course. Twelve to three, and five-thirty till the beer runs out. Special extension when the water runs out.

Tray—The Ministry cannot permit extension to any construction where the extension is not under construction at the time of the construction of the construction.

Handley—That's a bit constricting.

Tray—Here's a form.

Handley—What am I to do with it?

Tray—Fill it up, sir, fill it up.

Meanwhile this bath project must be postponed.

Handley—Sounds like dirty work. But the hole's been dug.

Tray—Fill it up, sir, fill it up.

Exit.

Aubrey Herbert

The Grumbler.

The Grumbler—I don't 'old with it.

Questioner—Don't hold with what?

G.—I don't 'old wiv nuffin, I don't.

Q.—Wouldn't be much good in a tug-o'-war team, would you!

G.—Don't 'old wiv wars. Wars makes the wimmin go into uniforms, they does. Then the wimmin gets uppish and won't fetch the beer.

Naive—What's beer?

G.—Wa'er and 'ope.

Q.—Not 'ops—hops, I mean?

G.—No 'ops. You skips them. Wa'er it is, dir'y wa'er. You drinks it and you 'ope it'll taste o' suffin and it don't. They don't 'old wiv our food tastin' o' nuffin. If anything tasted o' suffin we might get uppish.

Q.—Well, that would keep us from getting down in the mouth.

G.—I don't 'old with that. I once 'elped me old Ma to put a new tick on 'er fevver-bed, an' I got enough down in the mouth to last me for me natural.

Then there's eggs.

Q.—Where?

G.—In a manner o' speakin'. Dried 'uns tastes like Ma's ironin'-board and fresh 'uns smells to 'evving. Top 'ole.

Q.—Where are you off to?

G.—I gotter be goin'. I did up these yere braces o' mine wiv a bit o' string and *they don't 'old wiv that.*

Ethel Talbot Scheffauer

Readers' Market

FOR Sale: Fitzgerald's Works, 7 vols., £4 5s.; Cambridge Medieval History, new, £18; Bury's Gibbon, £4; Punch: Vols. 1 (1841) to Vol. 124 (1903), cloth bound, excellent condition, offers; Epstein charcoal portrait of Baudelaire, framed, £25; Portable Columbia gramophone, excellent condition, pair Jacobean brass candlesticks, offers; Mah Jongg, as new; complete car loudspeaker equipment, £40; Decca Portable Radiogram ("Portrola"), A.C. and D.C. 200-250 volts, good condition, what offers over £20?; good condition "Forever Amber," offers; beautiful 7ft. high 8-fold Chinese screen, £60; Ax. carpet, fawn/brown patt., approx. 13ft. 6in. × 11ft. 3in., good condit., £45; piano, Broadwood grand, walnut case, £75; fencing jacket (ladies) and foil; dress coat (tails), £4, blue serge suit £5, morning (tails) suit, £6. Linguaphone German course, as new, £8 8s.

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